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THE
THEOLOGICAL WORKS
OF
ISAAC BARROW, D.D.

VOLUME IV.

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THE
THEOLOGICAL WORKS

OF
ISAAC BARROW, D.D.

MASTER OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

IN NINE VOLUMES.

Edited for the Syndics of the University Press

BY

THE REV. ALEXANDER NAPIER, M.A.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, VICAR OF HOLKHAM, NORFOLK.

VOLUME IV.

CONTAINING

SIXTEEN SERMONS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

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M.DCCC.LIX.

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OBEDIENCE unto spiritual guides and gover- SERM.
L.
nors is a duty of great importance ; the which
to declare and press is very seasonable for these
times, wherein so little regard is had thereto : I
have therefore pitched on this text, being an apo-
stolical precept briefly and clearly enjoining that
duty ; and in it we shall consider and explain these
two particulars : I. The persons to whom obedience
is to be paid. II. What that obedience doth im-
port, or wherein it consisteth : and together with
explication of the duty, we shall apply it, and urge
its practice.

I. As to the persons, unto whom obedience is
to be performed, they are, generally speaking, all
spiritual guides, or governors of the church, (those
who speak to us the word of God, and who watch Heb. xiii.
7, 17.
for our souls, as they are described in the context,)
expressed here by a term very significant and
apposite, as implying fully the nature of their
charge, the qualification of their persons, their
rank, and privileges in the Church, together, con-

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L.

sequently, with the grounds of obligation to the correspondent duties toward them. There are in Holy Scripture divers names and phrases appropriate to them, each of them denoting some eminent part of their office, or some appurtenance thereto; but this seemeth of all most comprehensive; so that unto it all the rest are well reducible: the term is ἡγούμενοι, that is, *Leaders*, or *Guides*, or *Captains*; which properly may denote the subsequent particulars in way of duty, or privilege, appertaining to them.

1 It may denote eminence of dignity, or superiority to others: that they are, as it is said of Acts xv. 22. Judas and Silas in the Acts, ἄνδρες ἡγούμενοι ἐν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς, *Principal men among the brethren*: for to lead implieth precedence, which is a note of superiority and pre-eminence. Hence are they styled 1 Tim. v. 17. προεστῶτες, *Presidents* or *Prelates*; οἱ πρῶτοι, *the first* or *prime* men; Rom. xii. 8. οἱ μείζους *the greater*, majors, or grandees among us: 1 Thess. v. 12. He, saith our Lord, *that will be the first among you, let him be your servant*; Matt. xx. 27. and, *He that is greater among you, let him be as the younger*; Luke xxii. 26. *and he that is chief, as he that doth serve*; where ὁ μείζων and ὁ ἡγούμενος (the greater and the leader) are terms equivalent, or interpretative the one of the other; and our Lord in those places, as he prescribeth humility of mind and demeanour, so he implieth difference of rank among his disciples: whence to render especial respect and honour to them, as to our betters, is a duty often enjoined.

Phil. ii. 29. 1 Thess. v. 13. 1 Tim. v. 17.

2 It doth imply power and authority: their superiority is not barely grounded on personal worth or fortune; it serveth not merely for order and

pomp ; but it standeth upon the nature of their office, and tendeth to use : they are by God's appointment enabled to exercise acts of power ; to command, to judge, to check, control, and chastise in a spiritual way, in order to spiritual ends, (the regulation of God's worship and service, the preservation of order and peace, the promoting of edification in divine knowledge and holiness of life;) so are they ἡγούμενοι, as that word in common use (as the word ἡγεμὼν, of kin to it) doth signify, *Captains* and *Princes*, importing authority to command and rule ; (whence the Hebrew word נָשִׂא, a *Prince*, is usually rendered by it ; and ὁ ἡγούμενος is the title attributed to our Lord, to express his kingly function, being the same with ἀρχηγός, the *Prince* or *Captain*;) hence are they otherwise styled κυβερνήσεις (*Governors*), ἐπίσκοποι (*Overseers* or *Superintendents*, as St Hierome rendereth it), *Pastors*, (a word often signifying rule, and attributed to civil governors,) πρεσβύτεροι (*Elders* or *Senators*; the word denoteth not merely age, but office and authority), οἱ ἐπιμελοῦντες, such as take care for, the *Curators* or *Supervisors* of the Church : hence also they are signally and specially in relation unto God styled δοῦλοι (the *Servants*), διάκονοι (the *Ministers*), ὑπηρέται (the *Officers*), λειτουργοὶ (the *public Agents*), οἰκονόμοι (the *Stewards*), συνεργοὶ (the *Coadjutors* or *Assistants*), πρέσβεις (the *Legates*), ἄγγελοι (the *Angels* or *Messengers*), of God ; which titles imply, that God by them, as his substitutes and instruments, doth administer the affairs of his spiritual kingdom : that as by secular magistrates (his vicegerents and officers) he manageth his universal temporal kingdom, or governeth all men in order to their worldly

SERM.
L.

Matt. ii. 6.

Acts v. 31.

1 Cor. xii.
28.

Actsxx. 28.

Matt. ii. 6.

Ps. lxxviii.

71.

1 Pet. v. 1,

2.

2 Sam. v. 2;

vii. 7.

1 Tim. iii.

5.

2 Tim. ii.

24.

Rom. xv.

16.

1 Cor. iv. 1,

2 ;

iii. 9 ;

xvi. 16.

2 Cor. vi. 4.

Tit. i. 5.

Gal. iv. 14.

Apoc. i. 20.

SERM.
L.

peace and prosperity ; so by these spiritual magistrates he ruleth his Church toward its spiritual welfare and felicity.

3 The word also doth imply direction or instruction ; that is, guidance of people in the way of truth and duty, reclaiming them from error and sin : this, as it is a means hugely conducing to the design of their office, so it is a principal member thereof: whence διδάσκαλοι, *Doctors*, or masters in doctrine, is a common name of them ; and to be διδακτικοί, *Able and apt to teach*, (ικανοὶ διδάξαι, and πρόθυμοι,) is a chief qualification of their persons ; and to attend on teaching, to be instant in preaching, to labour in the word and doctrine, are their most commendable performances : hence also they are called *Shepherds*, because they feed the souls of God's people with the food of wholesome instruction ; *Watchmen*, because they observe men's ways, and warn them when they decline from right, or run into danger ; the *Messengers* of God, because they declare God's mind and will unto them for the regulation of their practice.

1 Pet. v. 3.
1 Tim. iv.
12.
Phil. iii. 17.
Tit. ii. 7.
2 Thess. iii.
9, 7.
Heb. iii. 7.
1 Thess. i.
6.
1 Cor. xi. 1 ;
iv. 16.

4 The word further may denote exemplary practice ; for to lead implieth so to go before, that he who is conducted may follow ; as a captain marcheth before his troop ; as a shepherd walketh before his flock ; as a guide goeth before the traveller whom he directeth ; hence they are said to be, and enjoined to behave themselves as patterns of the flock ; and the people are charged to imitate and follow them.

Such in general doth the word here used imply the persons to be, unto whom obedience is prescribed : but there is further some distinction to be

made among them; there are degrees and subordi- SERM.
L.
nations in these guidances; some are in regard to
different persons both empowered to guide, and
obliged to follow, or obey.

The church is *acies ordinata*, a well marshalled
army; wherein, under the Captain-general of our
faith and salvation, (the *Head of the body*, the 1 Pet. v. 4.
Heb. iii. 1.
Col. i. 18.
sovereign Prince and Priest, the Arch-pastor, the
chief *Apostle of our profession*, and *Bishop of our
souls*;) there are divers captains serving in fit
degrees of subordination; bishops commanding
larger regiments, presbyters ordering less numerous
companies; all which, by the bands of common
faith, of mutual charity, of holy communion and
peace, being combined together, do in their re-
spective stations govern and guide, are governed
and guided: the bishops, each in his precincts,
guiding more immediately the priests subject to
them; the priests, each guiding the people commit-
ted to his charge: all bishops and priests being
guided by synods established, or congregated, upon
emergent occasion; many of them ordinarily by
those principal bishops, who are regularly settled in
a presidency over them; according to the dis-
tinctions constituted by God and his Apostles, or
introduced by human prudence, as the preserva-
tion of order and peace (in various times and
circumstances of things) hath seemed to require: to
which subordination the two great Apostles may
seem to have regard, when they bid us *ὑποτάσσεσθαι* 1 Pet. v. 5.
Eph. v. 21.
Phil. ii. 3.
ἀλλήλοις, *to be subject to one another*^a; their injunction

^a Ὑποτασσέσθω ἕκαστος τῷ πλησίον αὐτοῦ, καθὼς καὶ ἐτέθη ἐν τῷ
χαρίσματι αὐτοῦ.—Clem. ad Cor. Ep. i. cap. xxxviii. [Cotel. Pat.
Apost. Tom. i. p. 167.]

SERM. at least may, according to their general intent,
 L. (which aimeth at the preservation of order and peace,) be well extended so far.

Of this distinction there was never in ancient times made any question^b, nor did it seem disputable in the Church, except to one malecontent, (Aerius,) who did indeed get a name in story, but never made much noise, or obtained any vogue in the world; very few followers he found in his heterodoxy; no great body even of heretics could find cause to dissent from the Church in this point; but all Arians, Macedonians, Novatians, Donatists, &c. maintained the distinction of ecclesiastical orders among themselves, and acknowledged the duty of the inferior clergy to their bishops: and no wonder, seeing it standeth upon so very firm and clear grounds; upon the reason of the case, upon the testimony of Holy Scripture, upon general tradition and unquestionable monuments of antiquity, upon the common judgment and practice of the greatest saints, persons most renowned for wisdom and piety in the Church.

Reason plainly doth require such subordinations; for that without them it is scarce possible to preserve any durable concord or charity in Christian societies, to establish any decent harmony in the worship and service of God, to check odious scandals, to prevent or repress baneful factions, to guard our Religion from being overspread with pernicious heresies, to keep the Church from being shattered into numberless sects, and thence from being crumbled into nothing; in fine, for any good time to uphold the profession and practice of

^b Cypr. Ep. x. xii. xxvii. lxv.

Christianity itself: for how, if there be not settled SERM.
L.
corporations of Christian people, having bulk and strength sufficient by joint endeavour to maintain the truth, honour, and interest of their Religion; if the Church should only consist of independent and incoherent particles, (like dust or sand,) easily scattered by any wind of opposition from without, or by any commotion within; if Christendom should be merely a Babel of confused opinions and practices; how, I say then could Christianity subsist? how could the simple, among so discordant apprehensions, be able to discern the truth of it? how would the wise be tempted to dislike it, being so mangled and disfigured? what an object of contempt and scorn would it be to the profaner world in such a case! It needeth therefore considerable societies to uphold it; but no society (especially of any large extent) can abide in order and peace, under the management of equal and co-ordinate powers, without a single undivided authority, enabled to moderate affairs and reduce them to a point, to arbitrate emergent cases of difference, to put good orders in execution, to curb the adversaries of order and peace: these things cannot be well performed where there is a parity of many concurrents, apt to dissent, and able to check each other^c; no democracy can be supported without borrowing somewhat from monarchy; no body can live without a head; an army cannot be

^c Ecclesiæ salus in summi Sacerdotis dignitate pendet; cui si non exors quædam, et ab omnibus eminens detur potestas, tot in ecclesiis efficientur schismata, quot sacerdotes.—Hier. adv. Lucif. [Opp. Tom. iv. p. ii. col. 295.]

Nec presbyterorum cœtus rite constitutus dici potest, in quo nullus sit ἡγούμενος.—Bez. de Min. Evang. Grad. cap. xxii.

SERM.
L.

without a general, a senate without a president, a corporation without a supreme magistrate^d: this all experience attesteth; this even the chief impugnors of episcopal presidency do by their practice confess; who for prevention of disorder have been fain of their own heads to devise ecclesiastical subordinations of classes, provinces, and nations; and to appoint moderators (or temporary bishops) in their assemblies; so that reason hath forced the dissenters from the Church to imitate it.

If there be not inspectors over the doctrine and manners of the common clergy, there will be many who will say and do any thing; they will in teaching please their own humour, or soothe the people, or serve their own interests; they will indulge themselves in a licentious manner of life; they will clash in their doctrines, and scatter the people, and draw them into factions.

It is also very necessary for preserving the unity and communion of the parts of the Catholic Church; seeing single persons are much fitter to maintain correspondence, than headless bodies.

The very credit of Religion doth require, that there should be persons raised above the common level, and endued with eminent authority, to whose care the promoting it should be committed; for such as the persons are, who manage any profession, such will be the respect yielded thereto: if the ministers of Religion be men of honour and authority, Religion itself will be venerable; if those be mean, that will become contemptible.

^d Essentiale fuit, quod ex Dei ordinatione perpetua necesse fuit, est, et erit, ut presbyterio quispiam et loco et dignitate primus actioni gubernandæ præsit cum eo, quod ipsi divinitus attributum est jure.—Bez. de Min. Evang. Grad. cap. xxiii. p. 153.

The Holy Scripture also doth plainly enough countenance this distinction; for therein we have represented one angel presiding over principal churches, which contained several presbyters; therein we find episcopal ordination and jurisdiction exercised; we have one bishop constituting presbyters in divers cities of his diocese; ordering all things therein concerning ecclesiastical discipline; judging presbyters, rebuking, *μετὰ πασῆς ἐπιταγῆς*, *with all authority*, (or imperiousness, as it were;) and reconciling offenders, secluding heretics and scandalous persons.

SERM.
L.

Rev. i. 3,
&c.

Tit. i. 5.
I Tim. v.
1, 17, 19,
20, 22, &c.
Tit. ii. 15.

In the Jewish Church there were an high-priest, chief-priest, a sanhedrim, or senate, or synod.

The government of congregations among God's ancient people (which it is probable was the pattern that the Apostles, no affecters of needless innovation, did follow in establishing ecclesiastical discipline among Christians) doth hereto agree; for in their synagogues, answering to our Christian churches, they had, as their elders and doctors, so over them an ἀρχισυνάγωγος^e, the head of the eldership, and president of the synagogue.

The primitive general use of Christians most effectually doth back the Scripture, and interpret it in favour of this distinction; scarce less than demonstrating it constituted by the Apostles; for how otherwise is it imaginable, that all the churches founded by the Apostles, in several most distant and disjoined places, (at Jerusalem, at Antioch, at Alexandria, at Ephesus, at Corinth, at Rome,) should presently conspire in acknowledgment and use of it? how could it without apparent

^e ראש הקהל

SERM. L. confederacy be formed, how could it creep in without notable clatter, how could it be admitted without considerable opposition, if it were not in the foundation of those churches laid by the Apostles? How is it likely, that in those times of grievous persecution, falling chiefly upon the bishops, (when to be eminent among Christians yielded slender reward, and exposed to extreme hazard; when to seek pre-eminence was in effect to court danger and trouble, torture and ruin,) an ambition of irregularly advancing themselves above their brethren should so generally prevail among the ablest and best Christians? How could those famous martyrs for the Christian truth be some of them so unconscionable as to affect, others so irresolute as to yield to such injurious encroachments? and how could all the holy Fathers (persons of so renowned, so approved wisdom and integrity) be so blind as not to discern such a corruption, or so bad as to abet it? How indeed could all God's Church be so weak as to consent in judgment, so base as to comply in practice with it? In fine, how can we conceive, that all the best monuments of antiquity down from the beginning (the acts, the epistles, the histories, the commentaries, the writings of all sorts coming from the blessed martyrs, and most holy confessors of our faith) should conspire to abuse us; the which do speak nothing but bishops; long catalogues and rows of bishops succeeding in this and that city; bishops contesting for the faith against pagan idolaters, and heretical corrupters of Christian doctrine: bishops here teaching and planting our Religion by their labours, there suffering and watering it with their blood?

I could not but touch this point: but I cannot
 insist thereon; the full discussion of it, and
 vindication of the truth from the cavils advanced
 against the truth by modern dissenters from the
 Church, having employed voluminous treatises: I
 shall only further add, that if any man be so dully
 or so affectedly ignorant as not to see the reason
 of the case, and the dangerous consequences of
 rejecting this ancient form of discipline; if any be
 so overweeningly presumptuous, as to question the
 faith of all history, or to disavow those monuments
 and that tradition, upon the testimony whereof
 even the truth and certainty of our Religion, and all
 its sacred oracles do rely; if any be so perversely
 contentious, as to oppose the custom and current
 practice of the churches through all ages down to
 the last age; so self-conceitedly arrogant, as to
 condemn or slight the judgment and practice of all
 the Fathers, (together also with the opinion of the
 later most grave divines, who have judged episco-
 pal presidency needful or expedient, where prac-
 ticable;) so peevishly refractory as to thwart the
 settled order of that Church in which he was bap-
 tized, together with the law of the country in which
 he was born; upon such a person we may look as
 one utterly invincible and intractable: so weak a
 judgment, and so strong a will, who can hope by
 reason to convert? I shall say no more to that
 point.

SERM.
L.

1 Cor. xi.
16.

The ἡγούμενοι then (the guides and governors) in
 our text are primarily the bishops, as the superior
 and chief guides, each in his place according to
 order peaceably established; then, secondarily, the
 presbyters, in their station as guides inferior,
 together with the deacons as their assistants: such

SERM. the Church always hath had, and such, by God's
 L. blessing, our Church now hath, toward whom the
 duty of obedience is to be performed.

To the consideration of that I should now proceed: but, first, it seemeth expedient to remove a main obstruction to that performance; which is this: a misprision, or doubt concerning the persons of our guides and governors; for in vain it would be to teach or persuade us to obey them, if we do not know who they are, or will not acknowledge them: for as in Religion, it is *Primus Deorum cultus Deos credere*, *The first worship of God to believe God*, as Seneca saith^f; so it is the first part of our obedience to our governors to avow them; it is at least absolutely prerequisite thereto. It was of old a precept of St Paul to the Thes-

¹ Thess. v. 12. *salonians; We beseech you, brethren, to know those who labour among you, and preside over you: and*

¹ Cor. xvi. 16, 18. *another to the Corinthians; Submit yourselves, saith he, to such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth: then he subjoineth, ἐπιγινώσκετε τοὺς τοιούτους, acknowledge such.* There were, it seemeth, those in the apostolical times who would not know or acknowledge their guides; there were even those

³ John 10. *who would not admit the Apostles themselves, as*

² Tim. iv. 15. *St John saith of Diotrophes, who resisted their words, as St Paul saith of Alexander, to whom the Apostles were not Apostles, as St Paul intimateth*

² Cor. ix. 2. *concerning some, in regard to himself; there were*

² Cor. xi. 13. *then pseud-apostles, who excluded the true Apostles,*

^{Phil. iii. 2.} *intruding themselves into that high office: no wonder then, it may be, that now, in these dregs of time, there should be many who disavow and desert their true guides, transferring the observance*

^f Sen. Ep. xcv. [49.]

due to them upon bold pretenders; who are not indeed guides, but seducers; not governors, but usurpers, and sacrilegious invaders of this holy office: the duty we speak of cannot be secured without preventing or correcting this grand mistake; and this we hope to compass by representing a double character, or description, one of the true guides, another of the counterfeits; by comparing which we may easily distinguish them, and consequently be induced dutifully to avow and follow the one sort, wisely to disclaim and decline the other.

Those, I say, then, who constantly do profess and teach that sound and wholesome doctrine, which was delivered by our Lord and his Apostles in word and writing, was received by their disciples in the primitive churches, was transmitted and confirmed by general tradition, was sealed by the blood of the blessed martyrs, and propagated by the labours of the holy Fathers; the which also manifestly recommendeth and promoteth true reverence and piety toward God, justice and charity toward men, order and quiet in human societies, purity and sobriety in each man's private conversation.

Those who celebrate the true worship of God, and administer the holy mysteries of our Religion in a serious, grave, decent manner, purely and without any notorious corruption, either by hurtful error, or superstitious foppery, or irreverent rudeness, to the advancement of God's honour, and edification of the participants in virtue and piety.

Those who derive their authority by a continued succession from the Apostles; who are called unto, and constituted in their office in a regular

SERM.
I

and peaceable way, agreeable to the institution of God, and the constant practice of his Church; according to rules approved in the best and purest ages: who are prepared to the exercise of their function by the best education that ordinarily can be provided, under sober discipline, in the schools of the prophets, who thence by competent endowments of mind, and useful furniture of good learning, acquired by painful study, become qualified to guide and instruct the people: who, after previous examination of their abilities, and probable testimonies concerning their manners, (with regard to the qualifications of incorrupt doctrine, and sober conversation prescribed by the Apostles,) are adjudged fit for the office; who also in a pious, grave, solemn manner, with invocation of God's blessing, by laying on the hands of the presbytery, are admitted thereunto.

1 Tim. iii.
7, 10; iv.
14.

Those whose practice in guiding and governing the people of God is not managed by arbitrary, uncertain, fickle, private fancies or humours, but regulated by standing laws; framed (according to general directions extant in Holy Scripture) by pious and wise persons, with mature advice, in accommodation to the seasons and circumstances of things for common edification, order, and peace.

Those who, by virtue of their good principles, in their disposition and demeanour appear sober, orderly, peaceable, yielding meek submission to government, tendering the Church's peace, upholding the communion of the saints, abstaining from all schismatical, turbulent, and factious practices.

Those also, who are acknowledged by the laws of our country, an obligation to obey whom is part

of that human constitution, unto which we are in all things (not evidently repugnant to God's law) indispensably bound to submit; whom our sovereign, God's vicegerent and the nursing father of his church among us, (unto whom in all things high respect, in all lawful things entire obedience is due,) doth command and encourage us to obey.

SERM.
L.
1 Pet. ii. 13.

Those, I say, to whom this character plainly doth agree, we may reasonably be assured, that they are our true guides and governors, whom we are obliged to follow and obey: for what better assurance can we in reason desire? what more proper marks can be assigned to discern them by? what methods of constituting such needful officers can be settled more answerable to their design and use? how can it be evil or unsafe to follow guides authorized by such warrants, conformed to such patterns, endowed with such dispositions, acting by such principles and rules? can we mistake or miscarry by complying with the great body of God's Church through all ages, and particularly with those great lights of the primitive Church, who by the excellency of their knowledge, and the integrity of their virtue, have so illustrated our holy Religion?

There are, on the other hand, sufficiently plain characters, by which we may descry seducers, and false pretenders to guide us.

Those who do *ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν*, *teach otherwise*, or discost from the good ancient wholesome doctrine, revealed in the Holy Scripture, attested by universal tradition, professed, taught, maintained to death by the primitive saints and martyrs; who

1 Tim. vi.
3; i. 3, 4.
Gal. i. 9.
1 Tim. i. 4;
vi. 4, 20.
2 Tim. ii.
14, 16, 23.
Tit. iii. 9.

SERM. affect novelties, uncouth notions, big words, and
L. dark phrases; who dote on curious empty specu-
2 Pet. ii. lations and idle questions, which engender strife,
18. and yield no good fruit.

Those^s who ground their opinions and warrant their proceedings, not by clear testimonies of divine revelation, by the dictates of sound reason, by the current authority of wise and good men, but by the suggestions of their own fancy, by the impulses of their passion and zeal, by pretences to special inspiration, by imaginary necessities, and such like fallacious rules.

Those who, by counterfeit shows of mighty zeal and extraordinary affection, by affected forms of speech, by pleasing notions, by prophesying smooth things, daubing and glozing, by various artifices of flattery and fraud, attract and abuse weak and heedless people.

Those who, without any apparent commission from God, or allowable call from men, or extraordinary necessity of the case, in no legal or regular way, according to no custom received in God's Church^h, do intrude themselves into the office, or are only assumed thereto by ignorant, unstable, giddy, factious people, such as those of whom St Paul saith, that, *According to their own lusts they heap up teachers to themselves, having itching ears.*

Those who are not in reasonable ways fitly prepared, not duly approved, not competently author-

^s Ordinationes eorum temerariæ, leves, inconstantes.—Tert. de Præscrip. Hær. cap. xli. [Opp. p. 217 c.]

^h Hi sunt qui se ultro apud temerarios convenas sine divina dispositione præficiunt, qui se præpositos sine ulla ordinationis lege constituunt, qui nemine episcopatum dante, episcopi sibi nomen assumunt.—Cypr. de Un. Eccl. [Opp. p. 197.]

ized, not orderly admitted to the office, according to the prescriptions of God's word, and the practice of his Church; not entering into the fold by the door, but breaking through, or clambering over the fences of sober discipline.

Those who in their mind, their principles, their designs, and all their practice, appear void of that charity, that meekness, that calmness, that gravity, that sincerity, that stability, which qualify worthy and true guides: who in the disposition of their mind are froward, fierce, and stubborn; in their principles loose and slippery; in their designs and behaviour turbulent, disorderly, violent, deceitful: who regard not order or peace, but wantonly raise scandals, create dissensions, abet and foment disturbances in the Church: who under religious appearances indulge their passions, and serve their interests, using a guise of devotion, and talk about holy things as instruments to vent wrath, envy, and spleen; to drive forward designs of ambition and avarice: who will not submit to any certain judgment or rule, will like nothing but what their fancy suggests, will acknowledge no law but their own will; who for no just cause, and upon any slender pretence, withdraw themselves, and seduce others from the Church in which they were brought up, deserting its communion, impugning its laws, defaming its governors, endeavouring to subvert its establishment: who manage their discipline (such as it is of their own framing) unadvisedly and unsteadily, in no stable method, according to no settled rule, but as present conceit, or humour, or advantage prompteth; so that, not being fixed in any certain judgment or practice, they soon

SERM. L. clash with themselves, and divide from one another, incessantly roving from one sect to another; being carried about with divers and strange doctrines; like children, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine.

Those, the fruits of whose doctrine and man-
 2 Tim. iii. 5; gery amount at best only to empty form of godliness, void of real virtue; while in truth they fill the minds of men with ill passions, ill surmises, ill-will; they produce impious, unjust, and uncharitable dealing of all kinds, particularly discontentful murmurings, disobedience to magistrates, schisms and factions in the Church, combustions and seditions in the State.

In fine, those who in their temper and their deportment resemble those ancient seducers, branded in the Scripture, those evil men, who did seduce, and were seduced:

Whose dispositions are represented in these
 Tit. i. 10. epithets: they were ἀνυπότακτοι, *unruly*, or persons indisposed and unwilling to submit to government;
 2 Pet. ii. 10. τολμηταὶ ἀνθάδεις, *presumptuous, and self-willed*, or
 Jude 16. self-pleasing darers; γογγυσταὶ, μεμψίμοιροι, *murmurers, complainers*, or, conjunctly, discontented
 Tit. iii. 11. mutiners; αὐτοκατάκριτοι, *self-condemned*, namely, by contradictory shuffling and shifting, or by excommunicating themselves from the Church; γόητες, 13; *bewitchers*, inveigling and deluding credulous people by dissimulation and specious appearances; Having
 ver. 5. a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; being Wolves in sheep's clothing, grievous wolves, not
 Matt. vii. 15. sparing the flock; Deceitful workers, transforming
 Acts xx. 29. themselves into the apostles of Christ, and minis-
 2 Cor. xi. 13, 15. ters of righteousness; Lovers of themselves, covetous,
 1 Tim. vi. 4. 2 Pet. iii. 16.

boasters, proud, revilers, truce-breakers, false accusers, traitors, heady, high-minded, vain talkers, deceivers, ignorant, unlearned, unstable:

SERM.
L.

2 Tim. iii.
2, 4.

Whose practices were; to cause divisions and offences contrary to received doctrine; by good words and fair speeches to deceive the hearts of the

Rom. xvi.
17, 18.

simple;—to swerve from charity—having turned aside to vain jangling, desiring to be teachers of

1 Tim. i.
6, 7.

the law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm: to beguile unstable souls; to lie in wait to deceive; to speak perverse things that

2 Pet. ii. 14.
Eph. iv. 14.
Acts xx.

they may draw disciples after them; to creep into houses, captivating silly women; to dote about ques-

30.
2 Tim. iii. 6.
1 Tim. vi.
4.

tions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings;

to speak swelling words of vanity; to admire persons because of advantage, (or out of private design,

2 Pet. ii. 18.
Jude 16.

for self-interest;) to subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre's sake;

Tit. i. 11.

to speak lies in hypocrisy; to preach Christ out of envy and strife, not out of good-will, or pure in-

1 Tim. iv. 2.
Phil. i. 15,
16.

tention, (οὐκ ἀγνῶς,) not purely; to promise liberty to their followers; to walk disorderly; (that is, in

2 Pet. ii. 19.
2 Thess. iii.
6, 11.

repugnance to order settled in the Church;) to despise dominion, and without fear to reproach dignities;

2 Pet. ii. 10.
Jude 8, 10.

to speak evil (rashly) of those things which they know not, (which are beside their skill and cognisance;) to separate themselves from the Church.

Such persons as these, arrogating to themselves the office of guides, and pretending to lead us, we must not follow or regard; but are in reason and conscience obliged to reject and shun them, as the ministers of Satan, the pests of Christendom, the enemies and murderers of souls.

Tit. iii. 10.
2 Thess. iii.
6.
Rom. xvi.
17.
1 Tim. vi. 5.

SERM.
L.

Jude 13.

Acts v. 36.

It can, indeed, nowise be safe to follow any such leaders, (whatever pretences to special illumination they hold forth, whatever specious guises of sanctity they bear,) who in their doctrine or practice deflect from the great beaten roads of Holy Scripture, primitive tradition, and catholic practice, roving in by-paths suggested to them by their private fancies and humours, their passions and lusts, their interests and advantages: there have in all ages such counterfeit guides started up, having debauched some few heedless persons, having erected some *παρασυναγωγὰς*, or petty combinations against the regularly settled corporations; but never with any durable success or countenance of divine Providence; but like prodigious meteors, having caused a little gazing, and some disturbance, their sects have soon been dissipated, and have quite vanished away; the authors and abettors of them being either buried in oblivion, or recorded with ignominy; like that Theudas in the speech of Gamaliel, who rose up, *Boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves; who was slain, and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.*

But let thus much suffice to have been spoken concerning the persons to whom obedience must be performed. I proceed to the duty itself.

II. The obedience prescribed may (according to the extent in signification of the word *πειθεσθαι*) be conceived to relate either to the government, or to the doctrine, or to the conversation of the persons specified; implying, that we should obey their laws, that we should embrace their doctrine, that we should conform to their practice, according

to proper limitations of such performance respectively. SERM.
L.

We begin with the first, as seeming chiefly intended by the words :

Obedience to ecclesiastical government; what this doth import we may understand by considering the terms whereby it is expressed, and those whereby its correlate (spiritual government,) is signified; by examples and practice relating to it, by the nature and reason of the matter itself.

Beside the word *πείθεσθαι*, (which is commonly used to signify all sorts of obedience, chiefly that which is due to governors,) here is added a word serving to explain that, the word *ὑπείκειν*, which signifieth to yield, give way, or comply; relating (as it seemeth by its being put indefinitely) to all their proceedings in matters concerning their charge. In other places, parallel to our text, it is expressed by *ὑποτάσσεσθαι*, the same term by which constantly the subjection due to secular powers, in all the precepts enjoining it, is expressed: *Ὁμοίως, νεώτεροι, ὑποτάγητε πρεσβυτέροις*, *In like manner, (or correspondently), saith St Peter, ye younger, submit yourselves to the elder; (that is, as the context shews, ye inferiors in the church obey your superiors; ὁ νεώτερος, both there and elsewhere, doth signify the state of inferiority, as ὁ πρεσβύτερος importeth dignity and authority.)* And, *ὑποτάσσεσθε τοῖς τοιούτοις*, *Submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth*, saith St Paul; and, *ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις*, *Submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of God*, that is, yielding conscientiously that submission, which established order requireth from

Tit. iii. 1.
Rom. xiii.

1.
1 Pet. ii.
13.

1 Pet. v. 5.
Luke xxii.
26.

1 Cor. xvi.
16.

Eph. v. 21.
1 Pet. v. 5.

SERM. one to another: whence we may collect, that the
 L. duty consisteth in yielding submission and compliance to all laws, rules, and orders enacted by spiritual governors for the due celebration of God's worship, the promoting edification, the conserving decency, the maintenance of peace; as also to the judgments and censures in order to the same purposes administered by them.

This obedience to be due to them may likewise be inferred from the various names and titles attributed to them; such as those of prelates, superintendents, pastors, supervisors, governors, and leaders; which terms (more largely touched before) do imply command and authority of all sorts, legislative, judicial, and executive.

Such obedience also primitive practice doth assert to them: for what authority the holy Apostles did assume and exercise, the same we may reasonably suppose derived to them; the same in kind, although not in peculiarity of manner, (by immediate commission from Christ, with supply of extraordinary gifts and graces,) and in unlimitedness of extent: for they do succeed to the Apostles in charge and care over the Church, each in his precinct, the apostolical office being distributed among them allⁱ. The same titles which the Apostles assumed to themselves they ascribe to their sympresbyters, requiring the same duties from them, and prescribing obedience to them in the same terms; they claimed no more power than was needful to further edification, and this is

² Cor. x. 8;
 xiii. 10.

ⁱ Cujus in solidum singuli participes sumus—Vid. Cypr. de Unit. Eccl. [Episcopatus unus est, cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur.—Opp. p. 195.]

requisite that present governors also should have; SERM. L.
 their practice in government^k may also well be
 presumed exemplary to all future governors. As 1 Cor. xi.
 then we see them διατάσσειν, to order things, and 34. Tit. i. 5.
 frame ecclesiastical constitutions; διορθοῦν, to rectify Acts xv. 28.
 things, or reform defects, to impose observances 1 Cor. v. 12.
 necessary, or expedient to the time; to judge 2 Cor. x. 6;
 causes and persons, being ready to avenge, or xiii. 10.
 punish, every disobedience; to use severity upon 1 Cor. iv.
 occasions; with the spiritual rod to chastise scan- 21.
 dalous offenders, disorderly walkers, persons contu- 2 Cor. xii.
 macious and unconformable to their injunctions; 21;
 to reject heretics, and banish notorious sinners xiii. 2.
 from communion, warning the faithful to forbear 2 Thess. iii.
 conversation with them: as they did challenge to 6, 14.
 themselves an authority from Christ to exercise Tit. iii. 10.
 these and the like acts of spiritual dominion and 1 Tim. vi. 5.
 jurisdiction, exacting punctual obedience to them; Rom. xvi.
 as we also see the like acts exercised by bishops^l, 17.
 whom they did constitute to feed and rule the
 Church; so we may reasonably conceive the go-
 vernors of the Church (the heirs of their office)
 invested with like authority in order to the same
 purposes, and that correspondent obedience is due
 to them; so that what blame, what punishment
 was due to those, who disobeyed the Apostles, doth
 in proportion belong to the transgressors of their
 duty toward the present governors of the Church;
 especially considering, that our Lord promised his Matt. xxviii. 20.
 perpetual presence and assistance to the Apostles.

^k To ordain elders. To confirm proselytes. To exercise jurisdiction.

^l Episcopi successores apostolorum.—Cypr. Epp. xxvii. lxix., &c. Epp. xlii. lxxv. (Firmil.)

SERM.
L.

We may further observe, that accordingly, in continual succession from the first ages, the good primitive bishops (the great patrons and propagators of our Religion) did generally assume such power, and the people readily did yield obedience; wherein that one did wrongfully usurp, the other did weakly comply, were neither probable nor just to suppose: whence general tradition doth also confirm our obligation to this duty.

That this kind of obedience is required doth also further appear from considering the reason of things, the condition of the Church, the design of Christian Religion.

1 Every Christian church is a society; no society can abide in any comely order, any steady quiet, any desirable prosperity, without government; no government can stand without correspondent obligation to submit thereto.

2 Again; The state of Religion under the Gospel is the kingdom of heaven; Christ our Lord is King of the Church; it he visibly governeth and ordereth by the spiritual governors, as his substitutes and lieutenants; (whence they peculiarly are styled his ministers, his officers, his stewards, his legates, his co-workers). When he ascending up to God's right hand was invested with entire possession of that royal state, he settled them to administer affairs concerning that government in

Eph. iv. 8,
11, 12.

his place and name: *Ascending up on high he gave gifts unto men.—He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers: he gave them, that is, he appointed them in their office, subordinate to himself, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the*

edifying of the body of Christ. As to him, therefore, SERM. L.
 ruling by them, by them enacting laws, dispensing
 justice, maintaining order and peace, obedience
 is due.

3 Again; For the honour of God, the com- 1 Cor. xiv.
 mendation of Religion, and benefit of the people, 23. Tit. ii. 15.
 it is needful, that in all religious performances
 things should, according to St Paul's rule, be per-
 formed decently, and according to order, without 1 Cor. xiv.
 unhandsome confusion and troublesome distraction: 40;
 this cannot be accomplished without a determination
 of persons, of modes, of circumstances appertaining
 to those performances; (for how can any thing be
 performed decently, if every person hath not his
 rank and station, his office and work allotted to
 him; if to every thing to be done, its time, its place,
 its manner of performance be not assigned, so that
 each one may know what, when, where, and how
 he must do?) Such determination must be com-
 mitted to the discretion and care of some persons,
 empowered to frame standing laws or rules concern-
 ing it, and to see them duly executed; (for all persons
 without delay, strife, confusion, and disturbance,
 cannot meddle in it:) with these persons all the
 rest of the body must be obliged to comply; other-
 wise all such determinations will be vain and inef-
 fectual. Such order reason doth recommend in
 every proceeding; such order especially becometh
 the grandeur and importance of sacred things; such
 order God hath declared himself to approve, and
 love, especially in his own house, among his people,
 in matters relating to his service; for, *He is not*, as xiv. 33.
 St Paul saith, arguing to this purpose, *the God of*
confusion, but of peace, in all churches of the saints.

SERM.
L.

Phil. ii. 2.
1 Pet. iii.
8.
Eph. iv. 3.
Phil. ii. 2;
i. 27; iii. 16.
Rom. xv.
5, 6; xii. 16.
2 Cor. xiii.
11.

Acts iv. 32.
1 Cor. xii.
25; xi. 18;
i. 11; iii. 3.
2 Cor. xii.
20.
Phil. ii. 14.

4 Again; It is requisite, that all Christian brethren should conspire in serving God with mutual charity, hearty concord, harmonious consent; that, as the Apostles so often prescribed, *They should endeavour to keep unity of spirit in the bond of peace; that They should be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; Standing fast in one spirit, with one mind; that They should walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing; that With one mind and one mouth they should glorify God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; that They should all speak the same thing; and that there be no divisions among them, but that they be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment; (like those in the Acts, of whom it is said, The multitude of believers had one heart and one soul;)* that *There should be no schisms (divisions, or factions) in the body; that all dissensions, all murmurings, all emulations should be discarded from the Church: the which precepts, secluding an obligation to obedience, would be impossible and vain; for (without continual miracle, and transforming human nature, things not to be expected from God, who apparently designeth to manage Religion by ordinary ways of human prudence, his gracious assistance concurring) no durable concord in any society can ever effectually be maintained otherwise than by one public reason, will, and sentence, which may represent, connect, and comprise all; in defect of that every one will be of a several opinion about what is best, each will be earnest for the prevalence of his model and way; there will be so many lawgivers as persons, so many differences as matters incident; nothing will pass*

smoothly and quietly, without bickering and jangling, and consequently without animosities and feuds: whence no unanimity, no concord, scarce any charity or good-will can subsist.

5 Further; In consequence of these things common edification requireth such obedience: it is the duty of governors to order all things to this end, that is, to the maintenance, encouragement, and improvement of piety; for this purpose their authority was given them, as St Paul saith, and therefore it must be deemed thereto conducive: it is, indeed, very necessary to edification, which without discipline guiding the simple and ignorant, reclaiming the erroneous and presumptuous, cherishing the regular, and correcting the refractory, can nowise be promoted.

Excluding it, there can be no means of checking or redressing scandals, which to the reproach of Religion, to the disgrace of the Church, to the corrupting the minds, and infecting the manners of men, will spring up and spread. Neither can there be any way to prevent the rise and growth of pernicious errors or heresies; the which assuredly in a state of unrestrained liberty the wanton and wicked minds of men will breed, their licentious practice will foster and propagate, to the increase of all impiety: their mouths must be stopped, otherwise, *They will subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre's sake;* the word of naughty seducers will spread like a gangrene, if there be no corrosive or corrective remedy to stay its progress.

Where things are not managed in a stable, quiet, orderly way, no good practice can flourish or

SERM.
L.

2 Cor. xiii.
10; x. 8.

1 Tim. i.
19; vi. 5.
2 Tim. ii.
16, 17, 18.

2 Tim. ii.
16.
Tit. i. 11.

2 Tim. ii.
17.

SERM.
L.

James iii.
16.

thrive; dissension will choke all good affections, confusion will obstruct all good proceedings; from anarchy, emulation and strife will certainly grow, and from them all sorts of wickedness; for, *Where, saith St James, there is emulation and strife, there is confusion and every evil thing.*

All those benefits, which arise from holy communion in offices of piety and charity (from common prayers and praises to God, from participation in all sacred ordinances, from mutual advice, admonition, encouragement, consolation, good example,) will together vanish with discipline; these depend upon the friendly union and correspondence of the members; and no such union can abide without the ligament of discipline, no such correspondence can be upheld without unanimous compliance to public order. The cement of discipline wanting, the Church
1 Pet. ii. 5. will not be like a spiritual house, compacted of lively stones into one goodly pile; but like a company of scattered pebbles, or a heap of rubbish.

So considering the reason of things, this obedience will appear needful: to enforce the practice thereof we may adjoin several weighty considerations.

Consider obedience, what it is, whence it springs, what it produceth; each of those respects will engage us to it.

It is in itself a thing very good and acceptable to God, very just and equal, very wise, very comely and pleasant.

It cannot but be grateful unto God, who is the God of love, of order, of peace, and therefore cannot but like the means furthering them pursued; he cannot but be pleased to see men do their

duty, especially that which regardeth his own ministers; in the respect performed to whom he is himself, indeed, avowed, and honoured, and obeyed^m. SERM.
L.

It is a just and equal thing, that every member of society should submit to the laws and orders of it; for every man is supposed upon those terms to enter into, and to abide in it; every man is deemed to owe such obedience, in answer to his enjoyment of privileges and partaking of advantages thereby; so therefore whoever pretendeth a title to those excellent immunities, benefits, and comforts, which communion with the Church affordeth, it is most equal, that he should contribute to its support and welfare, its honour, its peace; that consequently he should yield obedience to the orders appointed for those ends. Peculiarly equal it is in regard to our spiritual governors, who are obliged to be very solicitous and laborious in furthering our best good; who stand deeply engaged, and are responsible for the welfare of our souls: they must be contented to spend, and be spent; to undergo any pains, any hardships, any dangers and crosses occurring in pursuance of those designs: and is it not then plainly equal (is it not, indeed, more than equal, doth not all ingenuity and gratitude require?) that we should encourage and comfort them in bearing those burdens, and in discharging those incumbencies, by a fair and cheerful compliance? It is the Apostle's enforcement of the duty in our text: *Obey them, saith he, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as those who are to render an account,*

^m Tempus est,—ut de submissione provocent in se Dei clementiam, et de honore debito in Dei sacerdotem eliciant in se divinam misericordiam.—Cypr. Ep. xxx. [Opp. p. 41.]

SERM. *that they may do it with joy, and not with grief,*
 L. (or groaning.)

Is it not, indeed, extreme iniquity and ingratitude, when they with anxious care and earnest toil are endeavouring our happiness, that we should vex and trouble them by our perverse and cross behaviour?

Nay, is it not palpable folly to do thus, seeing thereby we do indispose and impede them from effectually discharging their duty to our advantage?

Heb. xiii.
 17.

Ἀλυσιτελές γὰρ ὑμῖν τοῦτο, *For this*, addeth the Apostle, further pressing the duty, *is unprofitable to you*, or it tendeth to your disadvantage and damage; not only as involving guilt, but as inferring loss; the loss of all those spiritual benefits, which ministers being encouraged, and thence performing their office with alacrity and sprightly diligence, would procure to you: it is therefore our wisdom to be obedient, because obedience is advantageous and profitable to us.

Ps. cxxxiii.
 1.

The same is also a comely and amiable thing, yielding much grace, procuring great honour to the Church, highly adorning and crediting Religion: it is a goodly sight to behold things proceeding orderly; to see every person quietly resting in his post, or moving evenly in his rank; to observe superiors calmly leading, inferiors gladly following, and equals lovingly accompanying each other: this is the Psalmist's *Ecce quam bonum! Behold, how* (admirably) *good, and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!* such a state of things argueth the good temper and wisdom of persons so demeaning themselves, the excellency of the principles which do guide and act them, the

goodness of the constitution which they observe; SERM. L.
so it crediteth the Church, and graceth Religion; a ———
thing which, as St Paul teacheth, in all things we Tit. ii. 10.
should endeavour.

It is also a very pleasant and comfortable thing to live in obedience; by it we enjoy tranquillity of mind and satisfaction of conscience, we taste all the sweets of amity and peace, we are freed from the stings of inward remorse, we escape the grievances of discord and strife.

The causes also and principles from which obedience springeth do much commend it: it ariseth from the dispositions of soul which are most Christian and most humane; from charity, humility, meekness, sobriety of mind, and calmness of passion; the which always dispose men to submit, complaisant, peaceable demeanour toward all men, especially toward those whose relation to them claimeth such demeanour: these a genuine, free, cordial, and constant obedience do signify to live in the soul; together with a general honesty of intention, and exemption from base designs.

In fine, innumerable and inestimable are the benefits and good fruits accruing from this practice; beside the support it manifestly yieldeth to the Church, the gracefulness of order, the conveniences and pleasures of peace, it hath also a notable influence upon the common manners of men, which hardly can ever prove very bad, where the governors of the Church do retain their due respect and authority; nothing more powerfully doth instigate to virtue, than the countenance of authority; nothing more effectually can restrain from exorbitancy of vice, than the bridle of discipline: this obvious

SERM.
I.

experience demonstrateth, and we shall plainly see, if we reflect upon those times when piety and virtue have most flourished: Whence was it, that in those good old times Christians did so abound in good works, that they burned with holy zeal, that they gladly would do, would suffer any thing for their Religion? whence but from a mighty respect to their superiors, from a strict regard to their direction and discipline? Did the bishops then prescribe long fasts, or impose rigid penances? willingly did the people undergo them: Did the pastor conduct into danger, did he lead them into the very jaws of death and martyrdom? the flock with a resolute alacrity did follow: Did a prelate interdict any practice scandalous or prejudicial to the Church, under pain of incurring censure? every man trembled at the consequences of transgressingⁿ: no terror of worldly power, no severity of justice, no dread of corporal punishment had such efficacy to deter men from ill-doing, as the reproof and censure of a bishop; his frown could avail more than the menaces of an emperor, than the rage of a persecutor, than the rods and axes of an executioner: no rod, indeed, did smart like the spiritual rod, no sword did cut so deep as that of the Spirit; no loss was then so valuable as being deprived of spiritual advantages; no banishment was so grievous as being separated from holy communion; no sentence of death was so terrible as that which cut men off from the Church; no thunder could astonish or

ⁿ Neque hoc ideo ita dixerim, ut negligatur ecclesiastica disciplina, et permittatur quisque facere quod velit, sine ulla correptione, et quadam medicinali vindicta, et terribili lenitate, et caritatis severitate.—Aug. c. Lit. Petil. III. 4. [Opp. Tom. IX. col. 300 D.]

affright men like the crack of a spiritual anathema: SERM.
L.
this was that which kept virtue in request, and vice in detestation; hence it was that men were so good, that Religion did so thrive, that so frequent and so illustrious examples of piety did appear; hence, indeed, we may well reckon, that Christianity did (under so many disadvantages and oppositions) subsist and grow up; obedience to governors was its guard; that kept the Church firmly united in a body sufficiently strong to maintain itself against all assaults of faction within, of opposition from abroad; that preserved that concord, which disposed and enabled Christians to defend their Religion against all fraud and violence; that cherished the true virtue, and the beautiful order, which begot veneration to Religion: to it therefore we owe the life and growth of Christianity; so that through many sharp persecutions it hath held up its head, through so many perilous diseases it hath kept its life until this day. There were not then of old any such cavils and clamours against every thing prescribed by governors; there were no such unconscionable scruples, no such hardhearted pretences to tender conscience devised to baffle the authority of superiors: had there been such, had men then commonly been so froward and factious as now, the Church had been soon shivered into pieces, our Religion had been swallowed up in confusion and licentiousness.

If again we, on the other hand, fix our consideration upon disobedience, (the nature, the sources, the consequences thereof,) it will, I suppose, much conduce to the same effect, of persuading us to the practice of this duty.

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It is in itself a heinous sin, being the transgression of a command in nature and consequence very important, upon which God layeth great stress, which is frequently inculcated in Scripture, which is fenced by divers other precepts, which is pressed by strong arguments, and backed by severe threatenings of punishment upon the transgressors.

It is in its nature a kind of apostasy from Christianity, and rebellion against our Lord; for, as he that refuseth to obey the king's magistrates in administration of their office is interpreted to disclaim his authority, and to design rebellion against him; so they, who obstinately disobey the ministers of our Lord's spiritual kingdom, do thereby appear to disavow him, to shake off his yoke, to impeach his reign over them; so doth he himself interpret and take it: *He, saith our Lord, that heareth you heareth me, and he that (ὁ ἀθετῶν, that baffleth) despiseth you despiseth me; and, If any man neglect to hear the church, (or shall disobey it, ἐὰν παρὰ κούσῃ,) let him be to thee as a heathen, and a publican; that is, such a refractory person doth by his contumacy put himself into the state of one removed from the Commonwealth of Israel, he forfeiteth the special protection of God, he becometh as an alien or an outlaw from the kingdom of our Lord°.*

Under the Mosaical dispensation, *Those who would do presumptuously, and would not hearken unto the priest that stood to minister before the Lord, did incur capital punishment; those who factiously*

° Nec putent sibi vitæ aut salutis constare rationem, si episcopis et sacerdotibus obtemperare noluerint; cum in Deuteronomio Dominus Deus dicat, &c.—Cypr. Ep. LXII. [Opp. p. 103.]

murmured against Aaron are said to make an SERM. L. insurrection against God, and answerably were punished in a miraculous way^p, (*The Lord made a new thing, the earth opened, and swallowed them up; they went down alive into the pit.*) Num. xvi. 11, 30. It was in the prophetical times an expression signifying height of impiety, *My people is as those who strive with the priest.* Hos. iv. 4. Seeing then God hath no less regard to his peculiar servants now, than he had then; seeing they no less represent him, and act by his authority now, than any did then; seeing their service is as precious to him, and as much tendeth to his honour now, as the Levitical service then did; seeing he no less loveth order and peace in the Church, than he did in the synagogue; we may well suppose it a no less heinous sin, and odious to God, to despise the ministers of Christ's gospel, than it was before to despise the ministers of Moses's law.

It is a sin, indeed, pregnant with divers sins, and involving the breach of many great commands, which are frequently proposed and pressed in the New Testament, with design in great part to guard and secure it: that of *Doing all things in charity*; 1 Cor. xvi. 14. of *Doing all things without murmurings and dissensions*; Phil. ii. 14. Rom. xii. 18. of *Pursuing peace so far as lieth in us*; 2 Tim. ii. 22. of maintaining unity, concord, unanimity in devotion; of avoiding schisms, and dissensions, and the like: which are all notoriously violated by this disobedience; it includeth the most high breach of charity, the most formal infringing peace, the most

^p Quo exemplo ostenditur et probatur obnoxios omnes et culpæ et poenæ futuros, qui se schismaticis contra præpositos et sacerdotes irreligiosa temeritate miscuerint—Id. Ep. LXXVI. [p. 155.]

SERM. scandalous kind of discord that can be, to cross our
 L. superiors^q.

It is also a practice issuing from the worst dispositions of soul, such as are most opposite to the spirit of our Religion, and indeed very repugnant to common reason and humanity; from a proud haughtiness or vain wantonness of mind; from the irregularity of unmortified and unbridled passion; from exorbitant selfishness, (selfishness of every bad kind, self-conceit, self-will, self-interest,) from turbulent animosity, froward crossness of humour, rancorous spite, perverse obstinacy; from envy, ambition, avarice, and the like ill sources, the worst fruits of the flesh and corrupt nature: to such dispositions the rejecting God's Prophets of old, and the non-compliance with the Apostles, are ascribed in Scripture; and from the same the like neglect of God's messengers now do proceed; as whoever will observe may easily discern; do but mind the discourses of factious people, you shall perceive them all to breathe generally nothing but ill-nature.

The fruits also which it produceth are extremely bad; manifold great inconveniences and mischiefs, hugely prejudicing the interest of Religion and the welfare of the Church.

It is immediately and formally a violation of order and peace; whence all the woful consequences of disorder and faction do adhere thereto^r.

It breedeth great disgrace to the Church and scandal to Religion; for what can appear more ugly,

^q An esse sibi cum Christo videtur, qui adversus sacerdotes Christi facit? &c.—Id. de Unit. Eccl. [p. 200.]

^r Vid. Ep. LV. [p. 82.] [Neque enim aliunde hæreses abortæ sunt, aut nata sunt schismata, quam inde quod sacerdoti Dei non obtemperatur.]

than to see among the professors of Religion children SERM.
L.
opposing their fathers, scholars contesting with their masters, inferiors slighting and crossing their superiors? What can more expose the Church and Religion to the contempt, to the derision of atheists and infidels, of profane and lewd persons, of wild heretics and schismatics, of all enemies unto truth and piety, than such foul irregularity^s?

It corrupteth the minds and manners of men: for when that discipline is relaxed which was ordained to guard truth and promote holiness; when men are grown so licentious and stubborn as to condemn their superiors, to disregard their wholesome laws and sober advice, there can be no curb to restrain them, but down precipitantly they run into all kind of vicious irregularities and excesses^t; when those mounds are taken away, whither will men ramble? when those banks are broken down, what can we expect but deluges of impious doctrine and wicked practice, to overflow the ignorant and inconsiderate people?

Doth not, indeed, this practice evidently tend to the dissolution of the Church and destruction of Christianity? for when the shepherds are (as to Matt.xxvi.
31. conduct and efficacy) taken away, will not the sheep be scattered, or wander astray, like sheep without a shepherd, being bewildered in various errors, and

^s Inde schismata, et hæreses abortæ sunt et oriuntur, dum episcopus, qui unus est, et ecclesiæ præest, superba quorundam præsumptione contemnitur.—Id. Ep. LXIX. [p. 122.]

Hæc sunt initia hæreticorum, et ortus atque conatus schismaticorum male cogitantium, ut sibi placeant, ut præpositum superbo tumore contemnant. Sic de Ecclesia receditur, sic altare profanum foris collocatur, sic contra pacem Christi et ordinationem atque unitatem Dei rebellatur.—Id. Ep. LXV. [p. 113.]

^t Ecclesiæ gloria præpositi gloria est.—Id. Ep. VI. [p. 11.]

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exposed as a prey to any wild beasts; to the grievous wolves, to the ravenous lions, to the wily foxes? Here a fanatical enthusiast will snap them, there a profane libertine will worry them, there again a desperate atheist will tear and devour them".

Consult we but obvious experience, and we shall see what spoils and ruins of faith, of good conscience, of common honesty and sobriety, this practice hath in a few years caused; how have atheism and infidelity, how have profaneness and dissoluteness of manners, how have all kinds of dishonesty and baseness grown up, since men began to disregard the authority of their spiritual guides! what dismal tragedies have we in our age beheld acted upon this stage of our own country! what bloody wars and murders, (murders of princes, of nobles, of bishops and priests!) what miserable oppressions, extortions, and rapines! what execrable seditions and rebellions! what barbarous animosities and feuds! what abominable treasons, sacrileges, perjuries, blasphemies! what horrible violations of all justice and honesty! And what, I pray, was the source of these things? where did they begin? where, but at murmuring against, at rejecting, at persecuting the spiritual governors, at casting down and trampling on their authority, at slighting and spurning their advice? Surely would men have observed the laws, or have hearkened to the counsels of those grave and sober persons, whom God had appointed to direct them, they never would have run into the commission of such enormities.

It is not to be omitted, that, in the present state

^u Chrysostom complained in his times: *Τοῦτο πάντων τῶν κακῶν αἴτιον, ὅτι τὰ τῶν ἀρχόντων ἠφανίσθη, οὐδεμία αἰδώς, οὐδεὶς φόβος.* &c.—Chrys. in 2 Tim. Or. II. [Opp. Tom. IV. p. 336.]

of things, the guilt of disobedience to spiritual go-
 vernors is increased and aggravated by the superve-
 nient guilt of another disobedience to the laws of
 our prince and country. Before the secular powers
 (unto whom God hath committed the dispensation
 of justice, with the maintenance of peace and order,
 in reference to worldly affairs) did submit to our
 Lord, and became nursing parents of the Church, Isai. xlix.
 the power of managing ecclesiastical matters did ^{23.}
 wholly reside in spiritual guides; unto whom Chris-
 tians, as the peculiar subjects of God, were obliged 1 Pet. ii. 9.
 willingly to yield obedience; and, refusing it, were
 guilty before God of spiritual disorder, faction, or
 schism: but now, after that political authority (out
 of pious zeal for God's service, out of a wise care to
 prevent the influences of disorder in spiritual mat-
 ters upon the temporal peace, out of grateful return
 for the advantages the Commonwealth enjoyeth
 from Religion and the Church) hath pleased to back
 and fortify the laws of spiritual governors by civil
 sanctions, the knot of our obligation is tied faster,
 its force is redoubled, we by disobedience incur a
 double guilt, and offend God two ways, both as
 supreme Governor of the world, and as King of the
 Church; to our schism against the Church we add
 rebellion against our prince, and so become no less
 bad citizens than bad Christians. Some may per-
 haps imagine their disobedience hence more ex-
 cusable, taking themselves now only thereby to
 transgress a political sanction: but (beside that
 even that were a great offence, the command of
 our temporal governors being sufficient, out of
 conscience to God's express will, to oblige us in all
 things not evidently repugnant to God's law) it is

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a great mistake to think the civil law doth anywise derogate from the ecclesiastical; that doth not swallow this up, but succoureth and corroborateth it; their concurrence yieldeth an accession of weight and strength to each; they do not by conspiring to prescribe the same thing either of them cease to be governors, as to right; but in efficacy the authority of both should thence be augmented, seeing the obligation to obedience is multiplied upon their subjects; and to disobey them is now two crimes, which otherwise should be but one.

Such is the nature of this duty, and such are the reasons enforcing the practice thereof: I shall only further remove two impediments of that practice, and so leave this point.

I One hindrance of obedience is this, that spiritual power is not despotical or compulsory, but parental or pastoral; that it hath no external force to abet it, or to avenge disobedience to its laws: they must not *κατεξουσιάζειν*, or *κατακυριεύειν*, (be imperious, or domineer,) they are not allowed to exercise violence, or to inflict bodily correction^x; but must rule in meek and gentle ways, directly influential upon the mind and conscience, (ways of rational persuasion, exhortation, admonition, reproof,) *In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves;—convincing, rebuking, exhorting with all longsuffering and patience*; their word is their only weapon, their force of argument all the constraint they apply: hence men commonly do not

Matt. xx.

^{25.}

Luke xxii.

^{26.}

1 Pet. v. 3.

2 Tim. ii;

²⁵; iv. 2.

1 Tim. iii. 3.

^x Μάλιστα γὰρ ἀπάντων Χριστιανοῖς οὐκ ἐφέϊται πρὸς βίαν ἐπανορθοῦν τὰ τῶν ἁμαρτανόντων πταίσματα, &c.—Chrys. de Sacerd. II. [Opp. Tom. VI. p. 9.]

Ἐνταῦθα οὐ βιαζόμενον, ἀλλὰ πείθοντα δεῖ ποιεῖν ἀμείνω τὸν τοιοῦτον.
—Ibid.

stand in awe of them, nor are so sensible of their obligation to obey them ; they cannot understand why they should be frightened by words, or controlled by an unarmed authority. SERM.
L.

But this in truth (things being duly considered) is so far from diminishing our obligation, or arguing the authority of our governors to be weak and precarious, that it rendereth our obligation much greater, and their authority more dreadful ; for the sweeter and gentler their way of governing is, the more disingenuous and unworthy a thing it is to disobey it ; not to be persuaded by reason, not to be allured by kindness, not to admit friendly advice, not to comply with the calmest methods of furthering our own good, is a brutish thing ; he that only can be scared and scourged to duty, scarce deserveth the name of a man : it therefore doth the more oblige us, that in this way we are moved to action by love rather than fear. Yet if we would fear wisely and justly, (not like children, being frightened with formidable shapes and appearances, but like men, apprehending the real consequences of things,) we should the more fear these spiritual powers, because they are insensible : for that God hath commanded us to obey them, without assigning visible forces to constrain or chastise, is a manifest argument, that he hath reserved the vindication of their authority to his own hand, which therefore will be infallibly certain, and terribly severe ; so the nature of the case requireth, and so God hath declared it shall be : the sentence that is upon earth pronounced by his ministers upon contumacious offenders, he hath declared himself ready to ratify in heaven, and therefore most

Matt. xviii.
18.

SERM. assuredly will execute it. As under the old law
L.

God appointed to the transgression of some laws, upon which he laid special stress, the punishment of being cut off from his people; the execution of which punishment he reserved to himself, to be accomplished in his own way and time; so doth he now in like manner take upon him to maintain the cause of his ministers, and to execute the judgments decreed by them; and if so, we may
Heb. x. 31. consider that, *It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* Ecclesiastical authority therefore is not a shadow, void of substance or force, but hath the greatest power in the world to support and assert it; it hath arms to maintain it most effectual and forcible, (those of which St Paul
2 Cor. x. 4. saith; *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God,—*) it inflicteth chastisements far more dreadful than any secular power can inflict; for these only touch the body, those pierce the soul; these concern only our temporal state, those reach eternity itself; these at most yield a transitory smart, or kill the body, those produce endless torment, and (utterly as to all comfort in being) destroy the soul.

The punishment for extreme contumacy is called
1 Cor. v. 5. delivery to Satan; and is not this far worse than, to be put into the hands of any gaoler or hangman^z? what are any cords of hemp or fetters of iron in comparison to those bands, of which it is said,
Matt. xviii. 18. *Whatever ye bind on earth shall be bound in heaven;* which engage the soul in a guilt not to be loosed, except by sore contrition and serious repentance?

^z Spiritali gladio superbi et contumaces necantur, dum de Ecclesia ejiciuntur.—Cypr. Ep. LXII. [Opp. p. 103.]

what are any scourges to St Paul's rod, lashing the heart and conscience with stinging remorse? what any axes or falchions to that *Sword of the Spirit*, which cutteth off a member from the body of Christ? what are any faggots and torches to that unquenchable fire and brimstone of the infernal lake? what, in fine, doth any condemnation here signify to that horrible curse, which devoteth an incorrigible soul to the bottomless pit?

It is therefore, indeed, a great advantage to this power that it is spiritual.

2 Another grand obstruction to the practice of this duty is, pretence to scruple about the lawfulness, or dissatisfaction in the expedience of that which our governors prescribe; that we are able to advance objections against their decrees; that we can espy inconveniences ensuing upon their orders; that we imagine the constitution may be reformed^a, so as to become more pure, more convenient and comely, more serviceable to edification; that we cannot fancy that to be best, which they enjoin: for removing this obstruction let me only propound some questions.

Were not any government appointed in vain, if such pretences might exempt or excuse from conformity to its orders? can such ever be wanting^b? Is there any thing devisable, which may not be impugned by some plausible reason, which may not disgust a squeamish humour? Is there any matter so clearly innocent, the lawfulness whereof a weak mind will not question; any thing so firm and solid, in which a small acuteness of wit

^a Cypr. Epp. L. LII.

^b Ἀλλὰ φιλοίνοις, ὡς φησὶν ἡ παροιμία, οἶνος οὐ λείπει, οὐδὲ φιλονείκῳ μάχη.—Socrat. Hist. Eccl. vii. 31. [Tom. II. p. 380.]

SERM. cannot pick a hole; any thing so indisputably cer-
 L. tain, that whoever affecteth to cavil may not easily
 devise some objections against it?

Is there any thing here that hath no inconveniences attending it? are not in all human things conveniences and inconveniences so mixed and complicated, that it is impossible to disentangle and sever them? can there be any constitution under heaven so absolutely pure and perfect, that no blemish or defect shall appear therein? can any providence of man foresee, any care prevent, any industry remedy all inconveniences possible? Is a reformation satisfactory to all fancies anywise practicable; and are they not fitter to live in the Platonic idea of a commonwealth than in any real society, who press for such an one? To be facile and complaisant in other cases, bearing with things which do not please us, is esteemed commendable, a courteous and humane practice: why should it not be much more reasonable to condescend to our superiors, and comport with their practice? is it not very discourteous to deny them the respect which we allow to others, or to refuse that advantage to public transactions which we think fit to grant unto private conversation?

To what purpose did God institute a government, if the resolutions thereof must be suspended till every man is satisfied with them^c; or if its state must be altered so often as any man can pick in it matter of offence or dislike; or if the proceedings thereof must be shaped according to the numberless varieties of different and repugnant fancies?

^c Οὐ γὰρ μόνον τὴν ἀρίστην (πολιτείαν) δεῖ θεωρεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν δυνατήν.—Arist. Pol. iv. 1.

Si, ubi jubeantur, quærere singulis liceat; pereunte obsequio, etiam imperium intercidit.—Tac. (Otho). [Hist. i. 83.]

Are, I pray, the objections against obedience SERM.
L.
so clear and cogent, as are the commands which enjoin, and the reasons which enforce it? are the inconveniences adhering to it apparently so grievous, as are the mischiefs which spring from disobedience? do they in a just balance counterpoise the disparagement of authority, the violation of order, the disturbance of peace, the obstruction of edification, which disobedience produceth?

Do the scruples (or reasons, if we will call them so) which we propound, amount to such a strength and evidence, as to outweigh the judgment of those whom God hath authorized by his commission, whom he doth enable by his grace, to instruct and guide us^d? May not those, whose office it is to judge of such things, whose business it is to study for skill in order to that purpose, who have most experience in those affairs specially belonging to them, be reasonably deemed most able to judge, both for themselves and us, what is lawful and what expedient? have they not eyes to see what we do, and hearts to judge concerning it, as well as we?

Is it not a design of their office to resolve our doubts and void our scruples in such cases, that we may act securely and quietly, being directed by better judgments than our own^e? Are they not

^d Dixisti sanè scrupulum tibi esse tollendum de animo, in quem incidisti. Incidisti, sed tua credulitate irreligiosa, &c.—Cypr. Ep. LXIX. (ad Florent.) [p. 123] vid. optime et apposite de hac re disserentem.

^e Id. Ep. LXXIII. [p. 136.] [Quapropter qui fidei et veritati præsumus, eos qui ad fidem et veritatem veniunt, et agentes poenitentiam remitti sibi peccata deposcunt, decipere non debemus et fallere, sed correctos a nobis ac reformatos ad regnum cœlorum disciplinis cœlestibus erudire.]

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L.

strictly obliged in conscience, are they not deeply engaged by interest, to govern us in the best manner? Is it therefore wisdom, is it modesty, is it justice for us to advance our private conceits against their most deliberate public resolutions? may we not in so doing mistake? may we not be blind or weak, (not to say fond, or proud, or perverse) and shall those defects or defaults of ours evacuate so many commands of God, and render his so noble, so needful an ordinance quite insignificant?

Do we especially seem to be in earnest, or appear otherwise than ludicrously, and illusively to palliate our naughty affections and sinister respects, when we ground the justification of our nonconformity upon dark subtleties and intricate quirks; which it is hard to conceive that we understand ourselves, and whereof very perspicacious men cannot apprehend the force? Do we think we shall be innocent men, because we are smart sophisters? or that God will excuse from our duty, because we can perplex men with our discourses? or that we are bound to do nothing, because we are able to say somewhat against all things?

Would we not do well to consider what huge danger they incur, and how massy a load of guilt they must undergo, upon whom shall be charged all those sad disorders and horrid mischiefs which surely will be consequent on disobedience? What if confusion of things, if corruption of manners, if oppression of truth, if dissolution of the Church do thence ensue; what a case then shall we be in, who confer so much thereto? Would not such considerations be apt to beget scruples far more disquieting an honest and truly conscientious mind,

than any such either profound subtleties or superficial plausibilities can do, which Dissenters are wont to allege? For needeth he not to have extreme reason (reason extremely strong and evident) who dareth to refuse that obedience which God so plainly commandeth; by which his own authority is maintained; on which the safety, prosperity, and peace of the Church dependeth; in which the support of Religion, and the welfare of numberless souls is deeply concerned?

Did, let me further ask, the Apostles, when they settled orders in the Church, when they imposed what they conceived needful for edification and decency, when they inflicted spiritual chastisements upon disorderly walkers, regard such pretences? or had those self-conceited and self-willed people (who obeyed not their words but resisted them) no such pretences? had they nothing, think we, to say for themselves, nothing to object against the apostolic orders and proceedings? They had surely; they failed not to find faults in the establishment, and to pretend a kind of tender conscience for their disobedience; yet this hindered not, but that the Apostles condemned their misbehaviour, and inflicted severe censures upon them.

Did not also the primitive bishops (and all spiritual governors down from the beginning every where almost to these days of contention and disorder) proceed in the same course; not fearing to enact such laws concerning indifferent matters and circumstances of Religion, as seemed to them conducive to the good of the Church? Did not all good people readily comply with their orders, how painful soever, or disagreeable to flesh and blood,

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2 Tim. iv.
15.
1 Tim. i.
20.
2 Thess. iii.
14, 6.

SERM. without contest or scruple? yet had not they as
 L. much wit, and no less conscience than ourselves? They who had wisdom enough to descry the truth of our Religion through all the clouds of obloquy and disgrace, which it lay under; who had zeal and constancy to bear the hardest brunts of persecution against it; were they such fools as to see no fault, so stupid as to resent nothing, or so loose as to comply with any thing? No surely; they were in truth so wise as to know their duty, and so honest as to observe it.

If these considerations will not satisfy, I have done; and proceed to the next point of our duty, to which the precept in our text may extend, concerning the doctrine of our guides: in which respect it may be conceived to imply the following particulars to be performed by us, as instances, or parts, or degrees thereof.

I We should readily and gladly address ourselves to hear them; not out of profane and wilful contempt or slothful negligence declining to attend upon their instructions: there were of old those, of whom the Prophets complain, who would not so much as hearken to the words of those whom God sent unto them; but stopped their ears, withdrew the shoulder, and hardened the neck, and would not hear: there were those in the evangelical times, *Who did ἀπωθεῖν τὸν λόγον, thrust away the word of God, judging themselves unworthy of eternal life; who would not admit or hear the word of life, and overtures of grace propounded by the Apostles: there were Gadarenes, who beseeched our Lord himself to depart from their coasts: there have always been Deaf adders, who stop their ears to the*

Neh. ix. 29.
 Prov. i. 24.
 Isai. lxv. 12;
 lxvi. 4.
 Jer. vii. 13;
 vi. 10.
 Acts xiii. 46.
 Matt. x. 14.

Luke viii. 37.
 Ps. lviii. 4, 5.

voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely; no wonder then if now there be those who will not so much as allow a hearing to the messengers of God, and the guides of their soul: some, out of a factious prejudice against their office, or their persons, or their way, do shun them, giving themselves over to the conduct of seducers; some, out of a profane neglect of all Religion, out of being wholly possessed with worldly cares and desires, out of stupidity and sloth, (indisposing them to mind any thing that is serious,) will not afford them any regard: all these are extremely blameable, offensive to God, and injurious to themselves. It is a heinous affront to God (implying an hostile disposition toward him, an unwillingness to have any correspondence with him) to refuse so much as audience to his ambassadors; it is an interpretative repulsing him: so of old he expressed it; *I, saith he, spake unto you, rising early and speaking, but ye heard not; I called you, but ye answered not:* so under the Gospel; *He, saith our Lord, that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth (or regardeth not) you despiseth me; and, We are ambassadors of Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God.* It is a starving our souls, depriving them of that food which God hath provided for them; it is keeping ourselves at distance from any means or possibility of being well informed and quickened to the practice of our duty, of being reclaimed from our errors and sins; it is the way to become hardened in impiety, or sinking into a reprobate sense. This is the first step to obedience; for, *How can we believe, except we hear?* this is that which St James urgeth, *Let every man*

SERM.
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Jer. vii. 13.

Luke x. 16.

2 Cor. v. 20.

Rom. x. 14.

James i. 19.

SERM. *be quick to hear; and which St Peter thus enjoineth,*
 L. *Like newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the*
 1 Pet. ii. 2. *word, that we may grow thereby: we should espe-*
cially be quick and ready to hear those whom God
hath authorized and appointed to speak; we should
desire to suck the milk of the word from those who
are our spiritual parents and nurses.

2 We should hear them with serious, earnest
 attention and consideration; so that we may well
 understand, may be able to weigh, may retain in
 memory, and may become duly affected with their
 discourses; we must not hear them drowsily and
 slightly, as if we were nothing concerned, or were
 hearing an impertinent tale; their word should not
 pass through the ears, and slip away without effect;
 but sink into the understanding, into the memory,
 Matt. xiii. 5. into the heart; like the good seed falling into a
 depth of earth, able to afford it root and nourish-
 ment; therefore we must attend diligently thereto:
 Heb. ii. 1. *Δεῖ περισσοτέρως ἡμᾶς προσέχειν, We should therefore*
give more abundant heed, as the Apostle saith, to the
things we hear, lest at any time we should let them
slip. This duty the nature and importance of their
 1 Thess. ii. 13. *word requireth: It is the word not of men, but, in*
truth, the word of the great God, (his word as pro-
ceeding from him, as declaring his mind and will, as
tendering his overtures of grace and mercy,) which
as such challengeth great regard and awe; it in-
formeth us of our chief duties, it furthereth our
main interests, it guideth us into, it urgeth us for-
ward in the way to eternal happiness; it is the
 James i. 21. *word that is able to save our souls, to render us wise*
 2 Tim. iii. 15. *unto salvation; it therefore claimeth and deserveth*
from us most earnest attention; it is a great indig-
nity and folly not to yield it.

3 We should to their instructions bring good dispositions of mind, such as may render them most effectual and fruitful to us; such as are right intention, candour, docility, meekness. SERM.
L.

We should not be induced to hear them out of curiosity, as having itching ears, being desirous to hear some new things, some fine notions, some taking discourse; somewhat to fancy or talk pleasantly about, (as the Athenians heard St Paul;) not out of censoriousness, or inclination to criticise and find fault, (as the Pharisees heard our Saviour, *Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him;*) not out of design to gratify our passions in hearing them to reprove other persons, or for any such corrupt and sinister intention; but altogether out of pure design that we may be improved in knowledge, and excited to the practice of our duty. 2 Tim. iv. 3.
Acts xvii. 21.
Luke xi. 54.

We should not come to hear them with minds imbued with ill prejudices and partial affections, which may obstruct the virtue and efficacy of their discourse, or may hinder us from judging fairly and truly about what they say; but with such freedom and ingenuity as may dispose us readily to yield unto and acquiesce in any profitable truth declared by them; like the generous Bereans, *who received the word, μετὰ πάσης προθυμίας, with all alacrity and readiness of mind, searching the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so; Ὡς ἀπτιγέννητα βρέφη, Like infants newly born, that come to the dug without any other inclination than to suck what is needful for their sustenance.* Acts xvii. 11.
1 Pet. ii. 2.

We should be docile and tractable, willing and apt to learn, shaking off all those indispositions of

SERM. L. soul (all dulness and sluggishness, all peevishness and perverseness, all pride and self-conceitedness, all corrupt affection and indulgence to our conceits, our humours, our passions, our lusts, and inordinate desires) which may obstruct our understanding of the word, our yielding assent to it, our receiving impression from it: there were those, concerning whom the Apostle said, that he could not proceed in his discourse, because they were *νωθοὶ ταῖς ἀκοαῖς*, *dull of hearing*, (or sluggish in hearing,) who were indisposed to hear, and incapable to understand, because they would not be at the pains to rouse up their fancies, and fix their minds upon a serious consideration of things: there were those, who had a spirit of slumber, eyes not to see, and ears not to hear; who did hear with the ear, but not understand; seeing did see, but not perceive; *For their heart had waxed gross, their ears were dull of hearing, and their eyes were closed*; such indocile persons there always have been, who, being stupified and perverted by corrupt affections, became incapable of bettering from good instruction: all such we should strive to free ourselves from, that we may perform this duty to our guides, and, *In meekness receive the engrafted word*.

Heb. v. 11.
1 Cor. iii. 2.
Isai. xxix.
10.
Rom. xi. 8.
Isai. vi. 9.
Acts xxviii.
26.
John xii.
40.
James i. 21.

These practices (of hearing, of attending, of coming well disposed to instruction) are at least steps and degrees necessarily prerequisite to the obedience prescribed; and further to press them all together upon us, we may consider, that it is strictly incumbent on them (under danger of heavy punishment and woe) willingly, earnestly, with all diligence and patience, to labour in teaching and admonishing us; *They must give attendance, and*

1 Cor. ix.
16.
2 Cor. v. 14.
1 Pet. v. 2.
Rom. xii. 7.
1 Tim. v.
17;
iv. 13, 16.

take heed unto their doctrine, that it may be sound and profitable; *They must preach the word, and be instant upon it in season, out of season, (that is, not only taking, but seeking and snatching all occasions to do it,) reproofing, rebuking, exhorting with all longsuffering and doctrine; They must warn every man, and teach every man in all wisdom, that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:* as they are obliged in such manner to do these things, so there must be correspondent duties lying upon us, to receive their doctrine readily, carefully, patiently, sincerely, and fairly: as they must be faithful dispensers of God's heavenly truth and holy mysteries, so we must be obsequious entertainers of them: imposing such commands on them doth imply reciprocal obligations in their hearers and scholars; otherwise their office would be vain, and their endeavours fruitless; God no less would be frustrated in his design, than we should be deprived of the advantages of their institution.

But further, it is a more immediate ingredient of this duty, that,

4 We should effectually be enlightened by their doctrine, be convinced by their arguments persuading truth and duty, be moved by their admonitions and exhortations to good practice; we should open our eyes to the light which they shed forth upon us, we should surrender our judgment to the proofs which they allege, we should yield our hearts and affections pliable to their mollifying and warming discourses: it is their part to subdue our minds to the *Obedience of faith*, and to subject our wills to the observance of God's commandments, (*Casting down imaginations, and every high*

SERM.
L.

2 Tim. iv. 2.

Col. i. 28.

1 Cor. iv. 2.

Rom. xvi.
26.

2 Cor. x. 5.

SERM. L. *thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;)* it must therefore answerably be our duty not to resist, not to hold out, not to persist obstinate in our errors or prejudices; to submit our minds to the power of truth, being willingly and gladly conquered by it; it must be our duty to subjugate our wills, to bend our inclinations, to form our affections to a free compliance of heart with the duties urged upon us; we should not be like those disciples, of whom our Lord complaineth thus; *O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:* nor like the Jews, with whom St Stephen thus expostulates; *Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.* They should speak with power and efficacy; we therefore should not by our indispositions (by obstinacy of conceit or hardness of heart) obstruct their endeavours: they should be co-workers of our joy (that is, working in us that faith and those virtues, which are productive of true joy and comfort to us;) we therefore should co-work with them toward the same end: they should edify us in knowledge and holiness; we should therefore yield ourselves to be fashioned and polished by them.

5 We should, in fine, obey their doctrine by conforming our practice thereto; this our Lord prescribed in regard even to the Jewish guides and doctors; *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses's seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do:* the same we may well conceive that he requireth in respect to his own ministers, the teachers of a better law, authorized

Luke xxiv.
25.

Acts vii. 51.

1 Cor. iv.
20; ii. 4.

2 Cor. i. 24.
1 Cor. iii. 5.

Matt. xxiii.
2, 3.

to direct us by his own commission, and thereto SERM. L.
 more specially qualified by his grace: this is, indeed,
 the crown and completion of all; to hear signifieth
 nothing; to be convinced in our mind, and to be
 affected in our heart, will but aggravate our guilt,
 if we neglect practice: every sermon we hear, that
 sheweth us our duty, will in effect be an endite-
 ment upon us, will ground a sentence of condem-
 nation, if we transgress it: for as *The earth which*
drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and
bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is Heb. vi. 7,
dressed, receiveth blessing from God, so that which 8; x. 26.
beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh
unto cursing, and its end is to be burned: and, *Not* Rom. ii. 13.
the hearers of the law are just with God, but the
doers of the law shall be justified. And it is a good
 advice, that of St James; *Be ye doers of the word,* James i. 22.
and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves;
 it is, he intimateth, a fallacy some are apt to put
 upon themselves, to conceit they have done suffi-
 ciently when they have lent an ear to the word;
 this is the least part to be done in regard to it,
 practice is the main; what is it to shew the way,
 to know it exactly, if we do not walk in it, if we
 do not by it arrive at our journey's end, the salva-
 tion of our souls? To have waited upon our Lord
 himself, and hung upon his discourse, was not
 available; for when in the day of account some
 shall begin to allege, *We have eaten and drunk* Luke xiii.
before thee, and thou hast taught in our streets; our 26, 27.
 Lord will say, *I know you not whence ye are; depart*
from me, all ye workers of iniquity. And it is our
 Lord's declaration in the case, *Whosoever heareth* Matt. vii.
these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken 24.
John xiv.
21.

SERM. *him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a*
 L. *rock;—but every one that heareth these sayings of*
mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a
foolish man, which built his house upon the sand.

Mark vi.
 20.

Matt. xiii.
 20.

Isa. lviii. 2.

Ezek.
 xxxiii. 30,
 31, 32.

John v. 35.

Many are very earnest to hear, they hear gladly, as Herod did St John Baptist's homilies; they receive the word with joy, as the temporary believers in the parable did; they do, as those men did in the Prophet, *Delight to know God's ways, do ask of God the ordinances of justice, do take delight in approaching God*; or as those in another Prophet, *Who speak one to another every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord: and they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but will not do them; for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness: and, lo, thou art to them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not: they for a time rejoice in the light of God's messengers as those Jews did in the light of that burning and shining lamp, St John the Baptist; but all comes to nothing; but they are backward and careless to perform, at least more than they please themselves, or what suiteth to their fancy, their humour, their appetite, their interest: many hearers will believe only what they like, or what suiteth to their prejudices and passions; many of what they believe will practise that only which sorteth with their temper, or will serve their designs; they cannot conform to unpleasant and unprofitable doctrines:*

sometimes care choketh the word; sometimes SERM. L. temptation of pleasure, of profit, of honour, allureth; sometimes difficulties, hazards, persecutions, discourage from obedience to it.

These particulars are obvious, and by most will be consented to: there is one point which perhaps will more hardly be admitted, which therefore I shall more largely insist upon; it is this,

6 That as in all cases it is our duty to defer much regard to the opinion of our guides, so in some cases it behoveth us to rely barely upon their judgment and advice; those especially among them who excel in dignity and worth, who are approved for wisdom and integrity; their definitions, or the declarations of their opinion, (especially such as are exhibited upon mature deliberation and debate, in a solemn manner,) are ever very probable arguments of truth and expediency; they are commonly the best arguments which can be had in some matters, especially to the meaner and simpler sort of people. This upon many accounts will appear reasonable.

It is evident to experience, that every man is not capable to judge, or able to guide himself in matters of this nature, (concerning divine truth and conscience). There are children in understanding; there are men weak in faith, (or knowledge concerning the faith;) there are idiots, Rom. xiv. 1; xv. 1, &c. *ἄκακοι*, (men not bad, but simple,) persons occupying the room of the unlearned, unskilful in the word of righteousness, who, as the Apostle saith, xvi. 18. 1 Cor. xiv. 16; iii. 2; viii. 10. need that one should teach them which be the first principles of the oracles of God. Heb. v. 12.

The vulgar sort of men are as undiscerning and

SERM. L. injudicious in all things^f, so peculiarly in matters of this nature, so much abstracted from common sense and experience; whence we see them easily seduced into the fondest conceits and wildest courses by any slender artifice or fair pretence; *Like children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.*

Eph. iv. 14.

There are also some particular cases, a competent information and skill in which must depend upon improvements of mind acquired by more than ordinary study and experience; so that in them most people do want sufficient means of attaining knowledge requisite to guide their judgment or their practice^g: and for such persons in such cases it is plainly the best, the wisest, and the safest way, to rely upon the direction of their guides, assenting to what they declare, acting what they prescribe, going whither they conduct.

The very notion of guides, and the design of their office, doth import a difference of knowledge, and a need of reliance upon them in such cases; it signifieth, that we are in some measure ignorant of the way, and that they better know it; and, if so, plain reason dictateth it fit that we should follow them: and, indeed, what need were there of guides,

^f Neque plebi judicium aut veritas.—Tac. [Hist. i. 32.]

^g Ἀκριτον ὁ δῆμος.—M. Ant. [IV. § 3.]

^g Ἄλλ' εἰδότες ἑτέροις βέλτιον εἶναι τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἡνίας ἐνδιδόναι τεχνικωτέροις, ἢ ἄλλων ἡνιόχους εἶναι ἀνεπιστήμονας, καὶ ἀκοὴν ὑποτιθέναι μᾶλλον εὐγνώμονα, ἢ γλῶσσαν κινεῖν ἀπαίδευτον.—Greg. Naz. Orat. II. [Opp. Tom. I. p. 35 A.]

—Fide calidus, et virtute robustus, sed minus dominica lectione fundatus, &c.—Cypr. Ep. xxii. (de Luciano). [Opp. p. 31.]

to what purpose should we have them, if we can sufficiently ken the way, and judge what we should do without them? SERM.
L.

In the state of learning, (in which the assigning us teachers supposeth us placed,) whatever our capacity may be, yet our judgment at least (for want of a full comprehension of things, which must be discovered in order and by degrees) is imperfect: in that state therefore it becometh us not to pretend exercise of judgment, but rather easily to yield assent to what our teachers, who see further into the thing, do assert; *The learner, as Seneca^h saith, is bound to be ruled, while he be-
ginneth to be able to rule himself.*

Δεῖ μανθάνοντα πιστεύειν, *A learner should in some measure be credulous*; otherwise, as he will often fail in his judgment, so he will make little progress in learning; for if he will admit nothing on his master's word, if he will question all things, if he will continually be doubting and disputing, or contradicting and opposing his teacher, how can instruction proceed? He that presently will be his own master is a bad scholar, and will be a worse master: he that will fly before he is fledged, no wonder if he tumble down.

There are divers obvious and very considerable cases in which persons most contemptuous of authority, and refractory toward their guides, are constrained to rely upon the judgment of others, and are contented to do it, their conscience shewing them unable to judge for themselves: in admitting the literal sense of Scripture, according to translations; in the interpretation of difficult places,

^h Regi ergo debet, dum incipit posse se regere.—Ep. xciv. [50.]

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L.

depending upon the skill of languages, grammar, and criticism, upon the knowledge of human arts and sciences, upon histories and ancient customs: in such cases, all illiterate persons (however otherwise diffident and disregardful of authority) are forced to see with the eyes of other men, to submit their judgment to the skill and fidelity of their learned guides, taking the very principles and foundations of their Religion upon trust: and why then consonantly may they not do it in other cases; especially in the resolution of difficult, sublime, obscure, and subtle-points, the comprehension whereof transcendeth their capacity? But further,

The more to engage and incline us to the performing this part of our duty, (the regarding, prizing, confiding in the judgment of our guides,) we may consider the great advantages, both natural and supernatural, which they have to qualify them in order to such purposes.

I They may reasonably be presumed more intelligent and skilful in divine matters than others; for as they have the same natural capacities and endowments with others, (or rather, commonly, somewhat better than others, as being designed and selected to this sort of employment,) so their natural abilities are by all possible means improved: it is their trade and faculty, unto which their education is directed; in acquiring ability toward which they spend their time, their care, their pains; in which

Heb. v. 14. they are continually versed and exercised, *Having, as the Apostle speaketh, by reason of use their senses exercised to discern both good and evil; for which also they employ their supplications and devotions to God.*

Many special advantages they hence procure, needful or very conducive to a more perfect knowledge of such matters, and to security from errors; such as are conversing with studies, which enlarge a man's mind, and improve his judgment; a skill of disquisition about things; of sifting and canvassing points coming under debate; of weighing the force of arguments, and distinguishing the colours of things; the knowledge of languages, in which the divine oracles are expressed; of sciences, of histories, of practices serving to the discovery and illustration of the truth; exercise in meditation, reading, writing, speaking, disputing, and conference, whereby the mind is greatly enlightened, and the reason strengthened; acquaintance with variety of learned authors, who with great diligence have expounded the Holy Scriptures, and with most accuracy discussed points of doctrine; especially with ancient writers, who, living near the apostolical times, and being immediately (or within few degrees mediately) their disciples, may justly be supposed most helpful toward informing us what was their genuine doctrine, what the true sense of their writings: by such means, as in other faculties, so in this of Theology, a competent skill may be obtained; there is no other ordinary or probable way; and no extraordinary way can be trusted, now that men appear not to grow learned or wise by special inspiration or miracle; after that all pretences to such by-ways have been detected of imposture, and do smell too rank of hypocrisy.

Since then our guides are so advantageously qualified to direct us, it is, in matters difficult and

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L.
——— doubtful, (the which require good measure of skill and judgment to determine about them) most reasonable, that we should rely upon their authority, preferring it in such cases to our private discretion; taking it for more probable, that they should comprehend the truth, than we (unassisted by them, and judging merely by our own glimmering light) can do; deeming it good odds on the side of their doctrine against our opinion or conjecture.

They have also another peculiar advantage toward judging sincerely of things, by their greater retirement from the world and disengagement from secular interests; the which ordinarily do deprave the understandings and pervert the judgments of men, disposing them to accommodate their conceits to the maxims of worldly policy, or to the vulgar apprehensions of men, many of which are false and base: by such abstraction of mind from worldly affairs, together with fastening their meditation on the best things, (which their calling necessarily doth put them upon,) more than is usual to other men, they commonly get principles and habits of simplicity and integrity, which qualify men both to discern truth better, and more faithfully to declare it.

Seeing then in every faculty the advice of the skilful is to be regarded, and is usually relied upon; and in other affairs of greatest importance we scruple not to proceed so; seeing we commit our life and health (which are most precious to us) to the physician, observing his prescriptions commonly without any reason, sometimes against our own sense; we intrust our estate, which is so dear, with the lawyer, not contesting his advice; we put our

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goods and safety into the hands of a pilot, sleeping securely, whilst he steereth us as he thinketh fit; seeing in many such occasions of common life we advisedly do renounce or wave our opinions, absolutely yielding to the direction of others, taking their authority for a better argument or ground of action, than any which our conceit or a bare consideration of the matter can suggest to us; admitting this maxim for good, that it is a more adviseable and safe course in matters of consequence to follow the judgment of wiser men, than to adhere to our own apprehensionsⁱ; seeing it is not wisdom (as every man thinks) in a doubtful case to act upon disadvantage, or to venture upon odds against himself, and it is plainly doing thus to act upon our own opinion against the judgment of those who are more improved in the way, or better studied in the point than ourselves; seeing in other cases these are the common approved apprehensions and practices; and seeing in this case there is plainly the same reason, for that there are difficulties and intricacies in this no less than in other faculties, which need good skill to resolve them; for that in these matters we may easily slip, and by error may incur huge danger and damage: why then should we not here take the same course, following (when no other clearer light, or prevalent reason occurreth) the conduct and advice of our more skilful guides? especially considering, that, beside ordinary, natural, and acquired

ⁱ Ὅν γὰρ ἂν ἡγήσωνται περὶ τοῦ συμφέροντος ἑαυτοῖς φρονιμώτερον ἑαυτῶν εἶναι, τούτῳ οἱ ἄνθρωποι ὑπερηδέως πείθονται.—Xen. de Cyri Instit. I. [6. 21.]

Ἐν μὲν τῷ πλεῖν πείθεσθαι δεῖ τῷ κυβερνήτῃ, ἐν δὲ τῷ ζῆν τῷ λογίζεσθαι δυναμένῳ βέλτιον.—Aristonymus apud Stob. Tom. II. Tit. 3. [Socrates. Stob. Floril. Tit. III. 41. Vol. I. p 95. Ed. Gaisford.]

SERM. L. advantages, they have other supernatural both obligations to the well discharging this duty, and assistances toward it: For,

2 We may consider, that they are by God appointed and empowered to instruct and guide us: it is their special office, not assumed by themselves, or constituted by human prudence, but ordained and settled by divine wisdom for our edification in knowledge, and direction in practice^k: they are God's messengers, purposely sent by him, selected and separated by his instinct for his work: they are by him given for the perfecting of the saints, and edifying the body of Christ: it is by God's warrant, and in his name, that they speak; which giveth especial weight to their words, and no mean ground of assurance to us in relying upon them: for who is more likely to know God's mind and will, who may be presumed more faithful in declaring them, than God's own officers and agents? those whose great duty, whose main concernment it is to speak, not their own sense, but the word of God? They are God's mouth, by whom alone ordinarily he expresseth his mind and pleasure; by whom he entreateth us to be reconciled in heart and practice to him: what they say therefore is to be received as God's word, except plain reason, upon due examination, do forbid.

If they by office are teachers, or masters in doctrine, then we answerably must in obligation be disciples, which implies admitting their doctrine and proficiency in knowledge thereby: if they are

^k *I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.*—Jer. iii. 15.

Vid. Cypr. Ep. LV.

appointed shepherds, then must we be their sheep, to be led and fed by them; if they are God's messengers, we must yield some credence, and embrace the message uttered by them; so the Prophet telleth us: *The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts:* so the Law of old enjoined;—*According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do; thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand nor to the left:* so our Lord also, in regard to the Scribes and Pharisees, saith, *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses's chair: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do;* upon account of their office, whatever they direct to (not repugnant to the divine law) was to be observed by the people; and surely in doubtful cases, when, upon competent inquiry, no clear light offereth itself, it cannot be very dangerous to follow their guidance whom God hath appointed and authorized to lead us; if we err doing so, we err wisely in the way of our duty, and so no great blame will attend our error.

3 We may consider, that our guides as such have special assistance from God; to every vocation God's aid is congruously afforded; but to this (the principal of all others, the most important, most nearly related to God, and most peculiarly tending to his service) it is in a special manner most assuredly and plentifully imparted.

They are *Stewards of God's various grace;* and they who dispense grace to others cannot want it themselves: they are *Co-operators with God,* and

SERM.
L.

Mal. ii. 7.

Deut. xvii.
11.

Matt. xxiii.
2, 3.

1 Pet. iv. 10.

1 Cor. iii. 9.

SERM. L. God consequently doth co-operate with them; it is God who doth *ἱκανοῦν*, render them sufficient to be ministers of the New Testament; and they minister of the ability which God supplieth; every spiritual labourer is obliged to say with St Paul, *By the grace of God I am what I am—I have laboured, yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me.*

2 Cor. iii. 5, 6. Phil. ii. 13. 1 Pet. iv. 11. 1 Cor. xv. 10. Eph. iv. 11, 12. 1 Cor. xii. 28. God's having given them, as St Paul saith, to the Church, doth imply, that God hath endowed them with special ability, and furthereth them (in their conscionable discharge of their ministry) with aid requisite to the designs of perfecting the saints, and edifying the body in knowledge, in virtue, in piety.

As the Holy Ghost doth constitute them in their charge, (according to that of St Paul in the Acts xx. 28. Acts, *Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers,*) so, questionless, he doth enable and assist them in administering their function. There is a gift (of spiritual ability and divine succour) imparted by their consecration to this office, *With the laying on the hands of the presbytery*, joined with humble supplications for them, and solemn benedictions in God's name upon them. The divine Spirit, which distributeth, as he seeth good, unto every member of the Church needful supplies of grace, doth bestow on them in competent measure the *Word of wisdom* and the *Word of knowledge* requisite for their employment.

1 Tim. iv. 14. 2 Tim. i. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 7, &c. Eph. iv. 16. Rom. xii. 5, 6. God of old did in extraordinary ways visibly communicate his Spirit unto his prophets and agents; the same he did liberally pour out upon the Apostles, and first planters of the gospel; the

same questionless he hath not withdrawn from those, who, under the evangelical dispensation, (which is peculiarly the *Ministration of the Spirit*, unto which the aid of God's Spirit is most proper and most needful) do still by a settled ministry supply the room of those extraordinary ministers; but imparteth it to them in a way, although more ordinary and occult, yet no less real and effectual, according to proportions answerable to the exigencies of need and occasion; and by the influence hereof upon the pastors of his Church it is, that our Lord accomplisheth his promise to be with it until the end of the world.

SERM.
L.

2 Cor. iii. 8.

Matt.
xxviii. 20.

Clavis scientiæ, the key of knowledge spiritual, is one of those keys which he hath given to them, whereby they are enabled to open the kingdom of heaven.

Luke xi.
52.

Great reason therefore we have to place an especial confidence in their direction; for whom can we more safely follow than those whom (upon such grounds of divine declarations and promises) we may hope that God doth guide; so that consequently in following them we do in effect follow God himself? *He that heareth you heareth me*, might be said, not only because of their relation unto Christ; but because their word proceedeth from his inspiration, being no other than his mind conveyed through their mouth.

Luke x. 16.

4 We may also for our encouragement to confide in our guides consider, that they are themselves deeply concerned in our being rightly guided; their present comfort, their salvation hereafter, depending upon the faithful and careful discharge of their duty herein: they must render an account for it;

SERM.
L.
— so that if, by their wilful or negligent miscarriage, we do fall into dangerous error or sin, they do thence not only forfeit rich and glorious rewards, (assigned to those who turn many unto righteousness,) but incur woful punishment; this doth assure their integrity, and render our confidence in them very reasonable: for as we may safely trust a pilot, who hath no less interest than ourselves in the safe conveyance of the vessel to port; so may we reasonably confide in their advice, whose salvation is adventured with ours in the same bottom, or rather is wrapped up and carried in ours: it is not probable they will (at least designedly) misguide us, to their own extreme damage, to their utter ruin: if they do not warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, God hath said that he will require his blood at their hands; and is it likely they wittingly should run such a hazard, that they should purposely cast away the souls for which they are so certainly accountable? It is our Apostle's enforcement of the precept in our text; *Obey them that guide you; for they watch for your souls as they that must give an account*: which argumentation is not only grounded upon the obligations of ingenuity and gratitude, but also upon considerations of discretion and interests; we should obey our guides in equity and honesty; we may do it advisedly, because they, in regard to their own accounts at the final judgment, are obliged to be careful for the good of our souls.

Ezek. iii.
18; xxxiii.
2, 8.

Heb. xiii.
17.

Upon these considerations, it is plainly reasonable to follow our guides in all matters, wherein we have no other very clear and certain light of reason or revelation to conduct us: the doing so is, indeed,

(which is further observable) not only wise in SERM. L. itself, but safe in way of prevention, that we be not seduced by other treacherous guides; it will not only secure us from our own weak judgments, but from the frauds of those who lie in wait to deceive. Eph. iv. 14. The simpler sort of men will in effect be always led, not by their own judgment, but by the authority of others; and if they be not fairly guided by those whom God hath constituted and assigned to that end, they will be led by the nose by those who are concerned to seduce them: so reason dic-
tateth that it must be, so experience sheweth it ever to have been; that the people, whenever they have deserted their true guides, have soon been hurried by impostors into most dangerous errors and extravagant follies; being carried about with Heb. xiii. 9. divers and strange doctrines; being like children, Eph. iv. 14. tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine.

It is therefore a great advantage to us, and a great mercy of God, that there are (by God's care) provided for us such helps, upon which we may commonly for our guidance in the way to happiness more safely rely, than upon our own judgments, liable to mistake, and than upon the counsel of others, who may be interested to abuse us; very foolish and very ingrateful we are, if we do not highly prize, if we do not willingly embrace this advantage.

I further add, that as wisdom may induce, so modesty and humility should dispose us to follow the direction of our guides: *Ye younger*, saith St 1 Pet. v. 5. Peter, *submit yourselves unto the elder*, (that is, ye inferiors to your superiors, ye that are the flock to your pastors,) *and*, subjoineth he immediately, *be*

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Prov. iii. 5,
7.
Rom. xii.
3, 10.
Gal. vi. 3.
Phil. ii. 3.
1 Cor. viii.
2.
1 Tim. vi.
4.

clothed with humility; signifying, that it is a point of humility to yield that submission; every modest and humble person is apt to distrust his own, and to submit to better judgments; and, not to lean to our understanding, not to be wise in our own eyes, not to seem to know anything, not to seem anybody to oneself, in humility to prefer others before ourselves, are divine injunctions, chiefly applicable to this case, in reference to our spiritual guides; for if it be pride or culpable immodesty to presume ourselves wiser than any man, what is it then to prefer ourselves in that respect before our teachers; as, indeed, we do, when without evident reason we disregard, or dissent from their opinion?

It is then a duty very reasonable, and a very commendable practice, to rely upon the guidance of our pastors in such cases, wherein surer direction faileth, and we cannot otherwise fully satisfy ourselves.

Neither in doing so (against some appearances of reason, or with some violence to our private conceits) do we act against our conscience, but rather truly according to it; for conscience (as the word in this case is used) is nothing else but an opinion in practical matters, grounded upon the best reason we can discern: if therefore in any case the authority of our guides be a reason outweighing all other reasons apparent, he that in such a case, notwithstanding other arguments less forcible, doth conform his judgment and practice thereto, therein exactly followeth conscience; yea, in doing otherwise, he would thwart and violence his own conscience, and be self-condemned, adhering to a less probable reason in opposition to one more probable.

I do not hereby mean to assert that we are obliged indifferently (with an implicit faith, or blind obedience) to believe all that our teachers say, or to practise all they bid us: for they are men, and therefore subject to error and sin; they may neglect or abuse the advantages they have of knowing better than others; they may sometimes, by infirmity, by negligence, by pravity, fail in performing faithfully their duty toward us; they may be swayed by temper, be led by passion, be corrupted by ambition or avarice, so as thence to embrace and vent bad doctrines: we do see our pastors often dissenting and clashing among themselves, sometimes with themselves, so as to change and retract their own opinions¹.

We find the prophets of old complaining of priests, of pastors, of elders and prophets, *Who handled the law, yet were ignorant of God; Who erred in vision, and stumbled in judgment; Who were light, and treacherous persons; Who polluted the sanctuary, and did violence to the law, and profaned holy things; From whom the law and counsel did perish; Who taught for hire, and divined for money; Who themselves departed out of the way, and caused many to stumble, and corrupted the covenant of Levi; Who destroyed and scattered the sheep of God's pasture.*

There were in our Saviour's time guides, of the ferment of whose doctrine good people were bid to beware; *Who transgressed and defeated the commandment of God by their traditions; Who did take away the key of knowledge, so that they would*

¹ O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.—Isai. iii. 12.

Jer. ii. 8.
Isai. xxviii.
7.
Jer. x. 21;
xii. 10;
xxiii. 11;
xviii. 18;
v. 31;
vi. 13;
Zeph. iii. 4.
Ezek. xxii.
26.
Mal. i. 6.
Ezek. vii.
26.
Mic. iii. 11.
Mal. ii. 8, 9.
Jer. xxiii. 2

Matt. xvi.
6, 12.
Luke xii. 1.
Matt. xv.
2, 6.
Luke xi.
52.

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Matt. xv.
14.

vers. 9.

not enter themselves into the kingdom of heaven, nor would suffer others to enter; Blind guides, who both themselves did fall, and drew others into the ditch of noxious error and wicked practice: the followers of which guides did in vain worship God, observing for doctrine the precepts of men.

There have not since the primitive times of the Gospel wanted those who (indulging to ambition, avarice, curiosity, faction, and other bad affections) have depraved and debased Religion with noxious errors and idle superstitions; such as St Bernard describeth, &c.^m

We are, in matters of such infinite concernment to our eternal welfare, in wisdom and duty obliged not wholly, without further heed or care, to trust the diligence and integrity of others, but to consider and look about us, using our own reason, judgment, and discretion, so far as we are capable; we cannot in such a case be blamed for too much circumspection and caution.

We are not wholly blind, not void of reason, not destitute of fit helps; in many cases we have competent ability to judge, and means sufficient to attain knowledge: we are therefore concerned to use our eyes, to employ our reason, to embrace and improve the advantages vouchsafed us.

We are accountable personally for all our actions, as agreeable or cross to reason; if we are mistaken by our own default, or misled by the ill guidance of others, we shall however deeply suffer for it, and die in our iniquity; the ignorance or error of our guides will not wholly excuse us from guilt, or exempt us from punishment; it is fit

Ezek. iii. 18.

^m Vid. Apol. Eccl. Ang.

therefore that we should be allowed, as to the sum of the matter, to judge and choose for ourselves: SERM.
L.
 for if our salvation were wholly placed in the hands of others, so that we could not but in case of their error or default miscarry, our ruin would be inevitable, and consequently not just: we should perish without blame, if we were bound, as a blind and brutish herd, to follow others.

We, in order to our practice, (which must be regulated by faith and knowledge,) and toward preparing ourselves for our grand account, are obliged to get a knowledge and persuasion concerning our duty; *To prove* (or search and examine) *what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God*; for ignorance, if anywise by our endeavour vincible, will not secure us: *He that, saith our Lord and Judge, knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes*; (few; not in themselves, but comparatively to those, which shall be inflicted on them who transgress against knowledge and conscience.) Rom. xii. 2.
Eph. v. 10.
Luke xii. 48.

We are bound to study truth, to improve our minds in the knowledge and love of it, to be firmly persuaded of it in a rational way; so that we be not easily shaken, or seduced from it.

The Apostles do charge it upon us as our duty and concernment, that, *We abound in faith and knowledge*; that, *We be rooted and built up in Christ, and stablished in the faith, so as to be steadfast, and unmoveable*; *Not to be soon shaken in mind, or troubled*; *To grow up and increase in all divine knowledge*; that, *The word of God should dwell richly in us in all wisdom*; that, *We should be filled with all knowledge, so as to be able to teach* 2 Cor. viii. 7.
Col. ii. 7.
1 Cor. xv. 58.
2 Thess. ii. 2.
Col. i. 10.
2 Pet. iii. 18.
1 Pet. ii. 2.
Eph. iv. 15.
Col. iii. 16.
Rom. xv. 14.

SERM. *and admonish one another; that, Our love should*
 L. *abound more and more in knowledge, and all judg-*
 Heb. v. 12. *ment, that we may approve things excellent, (or*
 Phil. i. 9, *scan things different;) that, We be enriched in all*
 10. *the word, (that is, in all the doctrine of the gospel,) and in all knowledge; that, We be filled with the*
 1 Cor. i. 5. *knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiri-*
 Col. i. 9. *tual understanding; that, We should not be unwise,*
 Eph. v. 17. *but understanding what the will of the Lord is;*
 Col. iv. 12. *that, We should be perfect and complete in all the*
 1 Cor. xiv. *will of God, (that is, first in the knowledge of it,*
 20. *then in compliance with it;) that, In understand-*
 Heb. v. 12. *ing we should not be children, but perfect men.*

Matt. vii. We are likewise by them commanded to *Take*
 15. *heed of false prophets; to Try the spirits whether*
 1 John iv. 1. *they are of God; to See that no man deceive us;*
 Matt. xxiv. *to Look that no man spoil us by vain deceit; to Try*
 4. *all things, and hold fast that which is good; which*
 Eph. v. 6. *precepts imply, that we should be furnished with*
 Col. ii. 8, *a good faculty of judgment, and competent know-*
 18. *ledge in the principal matters of Christian doctrine,*
 1 Thess. v. *concerning both the mysteries of faith and rules of*
 21. *practice. Our Lord himself and his Apostles did*
 not upon other terms than of rational considera-
 tion and discussion exact credit and obedience to
 their words; they did not insist barely upon their
 own authority, but exhorted their disciples to ex-
 amine strictly, and judge faithfully concerning the
 John v. 39; *truth and reasonableness of their doctrine: Search*
 x. 37, 38; *the Scriptures, for they testify of me; If I do not*
 xv. 22, 24; *the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I*
 xii. 48. *do, though ye believe not me, believe the works:*
 so our Lord appealed to their reason, proceeding
 upon grounds of Scripture and common sense:

and, *I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say*; so St Paul addressed his discourse to his disciples; otherwise we should be incapable to observe them. SERM.
L.
1 Cor. x.
15.

We are also bound to defer the principal regard to God's wisdom and will, so as, without reservation or exception, to embrace whatever he doth say, to obey what he positively doth command, whatever authority doth contradict his word, or cross his command: in such cases we may remonstrate with the Apostles, *If it be just before God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye*; and, *We ought to obey God rather than men*: we may denounce with St Paul; *If an angel from heaven preach any other gospel, let him be accursed*. Acts iv. 19;
v. 29.
Gal. i. 8.

We are obliged always to act with faith, (that is, with a persuasion concerning the lawfulness of what we do;) for, *Whatever is not of faith is sin*: we should never condemn ourselves in what we try or embrace. Rom. xiv.
22, 23.

These things considered, we may, and it much behoveth us, reserving due respect to our guides, with humility and modesty to weigh and scan their dictates and their orders; lest by them unawares we be drawn into error or sinⁿ; like the ingenuous Bereans, who did ἀνακρίνειν τὰς γραφὰς, *search and examine the Scriptures, if those things were so*. Acts xvii.
11.

We may, and are bound, if they tell us things evidently repugnant to God's word, or to sound reason and common sense, to dissent from them^o;

ⁿ They are not lords of our faith; the Apostles themselves were not so.—2 Cor. i. 24.

^o Plebs obsequens præceptis dominicis et Deum metuens a peccatore præposito separare se debet.—Cypr. [Ep. LXVIII. Opp. p. 118.]

SERM. if they impose on us things evidently contrary to
 L. God's law, to forbear compliance with them ; we
 Isai. viii. may in such cases appeal *ad legem et testimonium* ;
 20. we must not admit a *non obstante* to God's law.

If other arguments, weighed in the balance of honest and impartial reason, with cautious and industrious consideration, do overpoise the authority of our guides ; let us in God's name adhere to them, and follow our own judgments ; it would be a violation of our conscience, a prevarication toward our own souls, and a rebellion against God to do otherwise : when against our own mind, so carefully informed, we follow the dictates of others, we like fools rashly adventure and prostitute our souls.

This proceeding is nowise inconsistent with what we delivered before ; for this due wariness in examining, this reservation in assenting, this exception in practice, in some cases, wherein the matter hath evidence, and we a faculty to judge, doth nowise hinder but that we should defer much regard to the judgment of our guides ; that we should in those cases, wherein no light discovereth itself outshining their authority, rely upon it ; that where our eyes will not serve clearly to direct us, we should use theirs ; where our reason faileth to satisfy us, we should acquiesce in theirs ; that we should regard their judgments so far, that no petty scruple emerging, no faint semblance of reason should prevail upon us to dissent from their doctrine, to reject their advice, to disobey their injunctions.

In fine, let us remember, that the mouth of
 Matt. xv. truth, which bid us to beware of the bad doctrine
 14.

of those who sat in Moses's chair, did also charge SERM. L.
 us to observe all they taught and enjoined; that is, Matt. xxiii. 8.
 all not certainly repugnant to the divine law. In
 effect, if we discost from the advices of our sober
 teachers, appointed for us by God, we shall in the
 end have occasion to bewail with him in the
 Proverbs: *How have I hated instruction, and my* Prov. v. 13.
heart despised reproof; and have not obeyed the
voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them
that instructed me!

To these things I shall only add one rule, which
 we may well suppose comprised in the precept we
 treat upon; which is, that at least we forbear openly
 to dissent from our guides, or to contradict their
 doctrine; except only, if it be not so false (which
 never, or rarely, can happen among us) as to sub-
 vert the foundations of faith, or practice of holi-
 ness. If we cannot be internally convinced by
 their discourses, if their authority cannot sway
 with us against the prevalence of other reasons,
 yet may we spare outwardly to oppose them, or to
 slight their judgment; for doing thus doth tend,
 as to the disgrace of their persons, so to the dis-
 paragement of their office, to an obstructing the
 efficacy of their ministry, to the infringement of
 order and peace in the Church: for when the in-
 considerate people shall see their teachers dis-
 trusted and disrespected; when they perceive their
 doctrine may be challenged and opposed by plau-
 sible discourses; then will they hardly trust them,
 or comply with them in matters most certain and
 necessary; than which disposition in the people
 there cannot happen any thing more prejudicial or
 baneful to the Church.

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But let thus much serve for the obedience due to the doctrine of our guides ; let us consider that which we owe to them in reference to their conversation and practice.

The following their practice may well be referred to this precept ; for that their practice is a kind of living doctrine, a visible law, or rule of action ; and because, indeed, the notion of a guide primarily doth imply example ; that he which is guided should respect the guide as a precedent, being concerned to walk after his footsteps.

Most of the reasons, which urge deference to their judgment in teaching, do in proportion infer obligation to follow their example ; (which, indeed, is the most easy and clear way of instruction to vulgar capacity ; carrying with it also most efficacious encouragement and excitement to practice ;) they are obliged, and it is expected from them, to live with especial regularity, circumspection, and strictness of conversation ; they are by God's grace especially disposed and enabled to do so ; and many common advantages they have of doing so ; (a more perfect knowledge of things, firmness of principles, and clearness of notions ; a deeper tincture, and more savoury relish of truth, attained by continual meditation thereon ; consequently a purity of mind and affection, a retirement from the world and its temptation, freedom from distraction of worldly care and the encumbrances of business, with the like.)

They are often charged to be exemplary in conversation, as we before shewed, and that involveth a correspondent obligation to follow them. They
John v. 35. must, like St John Baptist, be burning and shining

lights; stars in God's right hand; lights of the world; whose light should shine before men, that men may see their good works; and by their light direct their steps. SERM.
L.
Rev. i. 16.
Matt. v. 14,
16.

They are proposed as copies, which signifies that we must in our practice transcribe them.

We are often directly commanded to imitate them; Ὡς μιμεῖσθε τὴν πίστιν, *Whose faith imitate ye*, (that is, their faithful perseverance in the doctrine and practice of Christianity,) saith the Apostle in this chapter. Heb. xiii. 7.

Their conversation is safely imitable in all cases wherein no better rule appeareth, and when it doth not appear discordant from God's law and the dictates of sound reason; for supposing that discordance, we cease to be obliged to follow them; as when our Lord prescribeth in respect to the Pharisees; *Whatever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not after their works; for they say, and do not.* Matt. xxiii. 3.

It is, indeed, easier for them to speak well than to do well; their doctrine therefore is more commonly a sure guide than their practice; yet when there wanteth a clearer guidance of doctrine, their practice may pass for instructive, and a probable argument or warrant of action.

SERMON LI.

OF SELF-LOVE IN GENERAL.

2 TIM. III. 2.

For men shall be lovers of themselves.

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LI.

ST Paul in this place out of a prophetic spirit instructing or warning his disciple Timothy, concerning difficult times^a, or the calamitous state of things, which should ensue, induced upon the world, as it useth to happen, by a general prevalence of vicious dispositions and practices among men, doth thence take occasion, by a specification of their vices, to characterize the persons who should concur to produce that hard state.

Among those vices he placeth self-love in the van, as the capital and leading vice; intimating thereby, that it is of all in its nature most heinous, or in its influence most noxious^b.

This, indeed, is of all vices the most common, so deeply radicated in our nature, and so generally overspreading the world, that no man thoroughly is exempted from it, most men are greatly tainted with it, some are wholly possessed and acted by it:

^a Ἐνστήσονται καιροὶ χαλεποί.—vers. 1.

^b Hæc omnia mala ab eo velut fonte manant, quod primum posuit, seipsos amantes.—August. in Joh. Tract. cxxiii. [Opp. Tom. iii. col. 817 D.]

this is the root from which all other vices do grow, and without which hardly any sin could subsist; the chief vices especially have an obvious and evident dependence thereon. SERM.
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All impiety doth involve a loving ourselves in undue manner and measure; so that we set ourselves in our esteem and affection before God; we prefer our own conceits to his judgment and advice; we raise our pleasure above his will and authority; we bandy forces with him, and are like the profane Belshazzar, of whom it is said, *Thou hast lifted up thyself against (or above) the Lord of heaven.* Dan. v. 23.

From hence particularly, by a manifest extraction, are derived those chief and common vices, pride, ambition, envy, avarice, intemperance, injustice, uncharitableness, peevishness, stubbornness, discontent, and impatience. For

We overvalue ourselves, our qualities and endowments, our powers and abilities, our fortunes and external advantages; hence are we so proud, that is, so lofty in our conceits, and fastuous in our demeanour.

We would be the only men, or most considerable, in the world; hence are we ambitious, hence continually with unsatiable greediness we do affect and strive to procure increase of reputation, of power, of dignity.

We would engross to ourselves all sorts of good things in highest degree; hence enviously we become jealous of the worth and virtue, we grudge and repine at the prosperity of others; as if they defalked somewhat from our excellency, or did eclipse the brightness of our fortune.

We desire to be not only full in our enjoyment,

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but free and absolute in our dominion of things; not only secure from needing the succour of other men, but independent in regard to God's providence; hence are we so covetous of wealth, hence we so eagerly scrape it, and so carefully hoard it up.

We can refuse our dear selves no satisfaction, although unreasonable or hurtful; therefore we so readily gratify sensual appetites in unlawful or excessive enjoyments of pleasure.

Being blinded or transported with fond dotage on ourselves, we cannot discern or will not regard what is due to others; hence are we apt upon occasion to do them wrong.

Love to ourselves doth in such manner suck in and swallow our spirits, doth so pinch in and contract our hearts, doth according to its computation so confine and abridge our interests, that we cannot in our affection or in real expression of kindness tend outwards; that we can afford little good-will, or impart little good to others.

Deeming ourselves extremely wise and worthy of regard, we cannot endure to be contradicted in our opinion, or crossed in our humour; hence upon any such occasion our choler riseth, and easily we break forth into violent heats of passion.

From the like causes it is, that we cannot willingly stoop to due obeisance of our superiors, in reverence to their persons, and observance of their laws; that we cannot contentedly acquiesce in the station or portion assigned us by Providence; that we cannot patiently support our condition, or accept the events befalling us.

In fine, if surveying all the several kinds of naughty dispositions in our souls, and of miscar-

riages in our lives, we do scan their particular nature, and search into their original causes; we shall find inordinate self-love to be a main ingredient and a common source of them all: so that a Divine of great name had some reason to affirm, that original sin (or that innate distemper, from which men generally become so very prone to evil and averse to good) doth consist in self-love, disposing us to all kinds of irregularity and excess^c: St Paul therefore might well set this in the front of all those sins which depraved the age he spake of; they having all such a dependance on it.

It is therefore very requisite, that we should well understand this fault, that we may be the better able to curb and correct it; to which purpose I shall endeavour, by God's help, somewhat to declare its nature.

The word self-love is ambiguous; for all self-love is not culpable; there is a necessary and unavoidable, there is an innocent and allowable, there is a worthy and commendable self-love.

There is a self-love originally implanted by God himself in our nature, in order to the preservation and enjoyment of our being; the which is common to us with all creatures, and cannot anywise be extirpated; for, *No man, as St Paul saith, ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it:* every man living, by a natural and necessary instinct, is prompted to guard his life, shunning all dangers threatening its destruction; to purvey for the support and convenience of it; to satisfy those

^c Est ergo ista ad peccandum amore sui propensio, peccatum originale, &c.—Zuingl. apud Bell. de Amiss. Grat. iv. 2. [§ 17. Tom. iv. p. 113.]

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natural appetites, which importunately crave relief, and without intolerable pain cannot be denied it; to repel or decline whatever is very grievous and offensive to nature^d; the self-love that urgeth us to do these things is no more to be blamed, than it can be shunned.

Reason further alloweth such a self-love, which moveth us to the pursuance of any thing apparently good, pleasant, or useful to us, the which doth not contain in it any essential turpitude or iniquity; doth not obstruct the attainment of some true or greater good; doth not produce some overbalancing mischief; doth not infer harm to the world, or wrong to other men^e.

Reason dictateth and prescribeth to us, that we should have a sober regard to our true good and welfare; to our best interest and solid content; to that, which (all things being rightly stated, considered, and computed) will in the final event prove most beneficial and satisfactory to us: a self-love working in prosecution of such things common sense cannot but allow and approve^f.

God himself hath to these suggestions of nature, and dictates of reason, adjoined his own suffrage, having in various ways declared it to be his will and pleasure, that we should tender our real and final good. He, as the author of nature, and

^d Panis ematur, olus, vini sextarius; adde
Queis humana sibi doleat natura negatis.—

Hor. Sat. i. i. [74.]

^e Ὡστε τὸν μὲν ἀγαθὸν δεῖ φιλαυτὸν εἶναι· καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς ὀνήσεται τὰ καλὰ πράττων, καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ὠφελήσει· τὸν δὲ μοχθηρὸν οὐ δεῖ βλάψει γὰρ καὶ ἑαυτὸν καὶ τοὺς πέλας, φαύλοις πάθεσιν ἐπόμενος.—
Arist. Eth. ix. 8. [7.]

^f Πᾶς γὰρ νοῦς αἰρεῖται τὸ βέλτιστον ἑαυτῷ· ὁ δὲ ἐπιεικὴς πειθαρχεῖ τῷ νῷ.—Id. Ibid. § 8.

fountain of reason, may be supposed to ordain that, unto which nature doth so potently incline, and which reason so clearly prescribeth. He plainly hath to every man committed himself in charge, so as to preserve his being from ruin, and to enjoy it with comfort^s. He by making so rich a provision for the sustenance of our lives, and satisfaction of our appetites, by framing our bodies to relish delight, and suiting so many accommodations in wondrous correspondence to our senses, hath sufficiently intimated it to be his pleasure, that we should in reasonable measure seek them and enjoy them; otherwise, his care would have been vain, and his work useless; yea, he might seem to have laid an ill design to tempt and ensnare us: he certainly had no such intent; but as he made us out of goodness, as he made us capable of tasting comfort, as he hath furnished us with means of attaining it, so he meaneth that we should partake thereof.

He also expressly hath commanded us to love all men, not excluding ourselves from the number; to love our neighbour, and therefore ourselves; who of all are nearest to ourselves; who occur as the first objects of humanity and charity; whose needs we most sensibly feel; whose good is in itself no less considerable than the single good of any other person; who must first look to our own good before we can be capable to love others, or do any good to our neighbour.

He therefore hath made the love of ourselves to be the rule and standard, the pattern, the argument of our love to others; imposing on us those

^s Quia tutela certissima ex proximo est, sibi quisque commissus est.—Sen. Ep. cxxi. [18.]

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Matt. xxii.

39.

Luke vi.

31.

Matt. xvi.
26.

great commands of loving our neighbours as ourselves, and doing as we would be done unto; which imply not only a necessity, but an obligation of loving ourselves.

He doth enforce obedience to all his commands by promising rewards, yielding immense profit and transcendent pleasure to us, and by threatening punishments grievous to our sense; which proceeding is grounded upon a supposition, that we do and ought greatly to love ourselves, or to regard our own interest and pleasure.

Prov. xix.
8, 16;

viii. 36;

xv. 32;

xxix. 24.

He doth recommend wisdom or virtue to us, as most agreeable to self-love; most eligible, because it yieldeth great benefit to ourselves^h; because, as the Wise Man saith, *He that getteth it, doth love his own soul; he that keepeth it, shall find good*; he dissuadeth from vice, as therefore detestable, because the embracing it doth imply hatred of ourselves, bringing mischief and damage to us; because, as the Wise Man doth express it, *He that sinneth, wrongeth his own soul; He that despiseth instruction, despiseth his own soul; He that committeth injury, hateth his own soul.*

Deut. x. 12.
Mic. vi. 8.
Neh. ix. 13.
Prov. iii. iv.
&c.

He commendeth his laws to our observance, by declaring them in their design and tendency chiefly to regard our good and advantage; made apt to preserve the safety and quiet, to promote the wealth and prosperity of our lives; to bring ease and comfort to our minds, grace and ornament to our names, salvation and happiness to our souls.

^h Aristotle saith of a virtuous man, that he is the greatest self-lover; Δόξειε δ' ἂν ὁ τοιοῦτος εἶναι μᾶλλον φίλαντος· ἀπονέμει γὰρ ἑαυτῷ τὰ κάλλιστα, καὶ μάλιστα ἀγαθὰ, καὶ χαρίζεται ἑαυτοῦ τῷ κυριωτάτῳ.—Eth. ix 8. [6.]

In fine, God chargeth and encourageth us to affect and pursue the highest goods whereof we are capable; most ample riches, most sublime honours, most sweet pleasures, most complete felicity; *He*, saith St Paul, *will render to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life*; to seek such things is the highest instance, is the surest argument of self-love that can be; he therefore who obligeth, who encourageth us thereto, doth plainly shew his approbation of a self-love. SERM.
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So it appeareth that all self-love is not culpable, but that some kind thereof is very commendable; how then shall we distinguish; how shall we sever, to use the Prophet's language, the precious from the vile? Rom. ii. 7.

To this we may answer in general, that all love of ourselves which is unreasonably grounded, or which is excessive in its degrees and limits; or which venteth itself in wrong instances; or which driveth our mind, will, and affections toward bad objects; or which produceth effects noxious to ourselves or others, is culpable. If we esteem ourselves for things not true or real, for things indifferent or mean, for things nowise excellent or valuable; if we affect ourselves beyond compass, so as to postpone the love of God, or exclude the love of our neighbour; if out of regard to ourselves we do things base or mischievous; if thence we dote upon vain profits, embrace foul pleasures, incur sinful guilt, expose ourselves to grievous danger, trouble, remorse, and punishment; if thereby we are engaged to forsake our true interest, and forfeit our final happiness; then assuredly it is a foolish and vicious Jer. xv. 19.

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Matt. xxii.

39.

Luke vi.

31.

Matt. xvi.

26.

great commands of loving our neighbours as ourselves, and doing as we would be done unto; which imply not only a necessity, but an obligation of loving ourselves.

He doth enforce obedience to all his commands by promising rewards, yielding immense profit and transcendent pleasure to us, and by threatening punishments grievous to our sense; which proceeding is grounded upon a supposition, that we do and ought greatly to love ourselves, or to regard our own interest and pleasure.

Prov. xix.
8, 16;

viii. 36;

xv. 32;

xxix. 24.

He doth recommend wisdom or virtue to us, as most agreeable to self-love; most eligible, because it yieldeth great benefit to ourselves^h; because, as the Wise Man saith, *He that getteth it, doth love his own soul; he that keepeth it, shall find good*; he dissuadeth from vice, as therefore detestable, because the embracing it doth imply hatred of ourselves, bringing mischief and damage to us; because, as the Wise Man doth express it, *He that sinneth, wrongeth his own soul; He that despiseth instruction, despiseth his own soul; He that committeth injury, hateth his own soul.*

Deut. x. 12.

Mic. vi. 8.

Neh. ix. 13.

Prov. iii. iv.

&c.

He commendeth his laws to our observance, by declaring them in their design and tendency chiefly to regard our good and advantage; made apt to preserve the safety and quiet, to promote the wealth and prosperity of our lives; to bring ease and comfort to our minds, grace and ornament to our names, salvation and happiness to our souls.

^h Aristotle saith of a virtuous man, that he is the greatest self-lover; Δόξειε δ' ἂν ὁ τοιοῦτος εἶναι μᾶλλον φίλαντος· ἀπονέμει γὰρ ἑαυτῷ τὰ κάλλιστα, καὶ μάλιστα ἀγαθὰ, καὶ χαρίζεται ἑαυτοῦ τῷ κυριωτάτῳ.—Eth. ix 8. [6.]

In fine, God chargeth and encourageth us to affect and pursue the highest goods whereof we are capable; most ample riches, most sublime honours, most sweet pleasures, most complete felicity; *He*, saith St Paul, *will render to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life*; to seek such things is the highest instance, is the surest argument of self-love that can be; he therefore who obligeth, who encourageth us thereto, doth plainly shew his approbation of a self-love. SERM.
LI.

So it appeareth that all self-love is not culpable, but that some kind thereof is very commendable; how then shall we distinguish; how shall we sever, to use the Prophet's language, the precious from the vile? Rom. ii. 7.

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self-love; it is, indeed, not a proper, but a false and equivocal love, usurping that goodly name; it is a real hatred, or enmity, disguised under the semblance of friendship; it more properly may be called cruelty, treachery, flattery, mockery, delusion, and abuse of ourselves.

But for a more distinct and clear resolution of the case, we may do well to consider the proper acts of love, which do constitute it, or inseparably do adhere thereto; such as those: a good esteem of the person, which is the object of our love; an earnest good-will toward him, or desire of his good; a complacence in good, and dissatisfaction in evil arriving to him; a readiness to yield or procure good to him; a desire of union and enjoyment, that is, of intimate conversation and intercourse with him, a deference of regard to him, a compliance with his desires, and care to please him. Now if these acts toward ourselves are in their kind, in their grounds, in their measures conformable to reason, piety, and justice, then is our self-love innocent or worthy: if they are not so, it is criminal and vicious.

If we do rightly esteem ourselves, (both absolutely, and in comparison to others;) if we desire to ourselves what is fit and just; if we are pleased with true goods, and displeased at real evils incident to us; if we do in lawful ways endeavour to procure things truly convenient and beneficial to us; if we maintain a faithful and cheerful correspondence with ourselves; if we have a sober regard to ourselves, agreeable to our nature and state; if we comply with the dictates of our reason, and satisfy our desires conforming thereto; then do

we love ourselves innocently, then are we true friends to ourselves. SERM.
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But if we overvalue ourselves; if we do wish to ourselves things incommodious or hurtful; if we are delighted or dissatisfied in false shows of good or evil befalling us; if we strive to acquire for ourselves things bad or mischievous; if our converse with ourselves is naughty or vain; if we make indecent applications to ourselves; if we stoop to our fond humours, or soothe our unreasonable desires; then is our self-love spurious, then are we, indeed, enemies to ourselves.

Further, toward an exact discussion and trial of this case, we should do well, divesting ourselves of selfishness, to consider ourselves as other persons, or abstractedly as mere objects of those acts which love doth imply; for what rectitude or what obliquity there would be in them in regard to any object, the same would be in reference to ourselves. For instance,

If we should value any person justly according to his real worth, allowing a just rate to his virtue, to his parts, to his endowments, to his advantages of nature or fortune; not ascribing to him things which belong not to him, nor overprizing those he hath, not preferring him in any respect before those which are his superiors or equals therein; we shall herein do wisely and justly: but if (having our judgment anywise perverted) we do admire a person beyond his worth, and advance him above his rank; if we overlook his apparent defects and blemishes, or take them for excellencies, and yield them applause; what is this but folly and dotage, tempered with iniquity? and if it be such in regard

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to another, it is no less such in respect to ourselves.

If to any person we should wish things suitable, commodious, and advantageous, by obtaining which he, without any wrong or prejudice to others, might be considerably benefited, we shall herein act humanely, and like good friends; but if we desire things to him, which do not become or befit him, which will do him mischief, or which he cannot have without injury and damage to others, are we not herein notoriously unkind or unjust? The case is the same transferred to ourselves.

If we should observe any man by occurrences happening to him well improved in his condition, thriving in an honest way, prosperous in good undertakings, growing in worthy accomplishments of soul, to find satisfaction therein would be greatly laudable; and so it would be to condole, if we should see any man to fall into any grievous disaster or calamity; but should we behold a man (although in false appearance bettered, yet really) prejudiced and endamaged, (as when one is enriched by cozenage or rapine, is advanced by flattery or sycophantry, is famed for base or vain exploits, is immersed into care and trouble, is exposed to danger and temptation, is fallen into the enchantments of pleasure,) are we not, if we take pleasure therein, very silly, or very cruel? and if we should observe good physic administered to a sick neighbour, or that he is engaged in painful exercise for his health, should it not be absurd for us to be sorry thereat? For the same reasons we are blameable if we do rejoice when that we prosper in bad courses, or enjoy sinful pleasures, or fall into dangerous temp-

tations; if we distaste the wholesome physic of adversity dispensed by Providence, or dislike the needful exercises of duty by God prescribed to us. SERM.
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If we do yield our advice and aid to our neighbour, in furtherance of any design which is honest and beneficial to him, we then unquestionably do well; but if we do abet or encourage him in unjust or mischievous enterprises; if we render ourselves panders to his unlawful desires, factors for his unjust profits, complices of his wicked practices, advocates of his sins; is this true love, is this faithful friendship? No surely; nor is it such toward ourselves, when we employ our faculties in contrivance or achievement of any unlawful designs, however satisfactory to our desires.

If we should indifferently (without regard to the laws of piety, justice, humanity, or decency) espouse the interests of any person, so that for the promoting his designs, advancing his profit, gratifying his humour or pleasure, we should violate the commands of God, we should neglect the public good, we should work injury or mischief to our neighbour; would this dealing be allowable? Neither would it be so, if for our own sake, in regard to our private interest, we should thus behave ourselves.

If we do affect to hold free, sincere, cheerful, kind conversation with any person, for mutual instruction and comfort, this is sociable and friendly; but if we maintain frothy, foul, malicious, anywise pestilent discourse, apt to corrupt, or to annoy him, this is loathsome: and so it is, if we keep such intercourse with ourselves, harbouring vain, impure, unjust, uncharitable thoughts in our minds.

If we should defer regard to any man, answer-

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able to his worth, we should thereby practise according to the good rules of humanity: but should we so affect or fancy any man that we should care for no man else, should pay no due respect, or perform any office of kindness elsewhere; should take no man's word, or mind any man's opinion beside, nor care to converse with any other; would this be love, would it not be ridiculous fondness? It is no less, if in regard to ourselves we are so morose, surly, or neglectful.

If we should comply with any man's reasonable desire, this were fair and courteous; if we should confide in the probable assistance of any person, this were modest prudence: but if we should entirely conform our practice to the will or humour of another, against the dictates of our own reason, and to the harm of ourselves or others; would this be love, would it not rather be vile and pitiful slavery? If we should without any ground, yea against plain reason, rely upon the help or direction of another, would this be love, would it not rather be wild presumption? The same therefore it must be in us, if we in like manner are devoted to our own will, or confident in our own ability.

If we should commend any man for good qualities or good deeds, this is honest; if we should encourage him in good undertakings, this is charitable: but to applaud his defects, to bolster him in ill practice, this is flattery and treachery; and in so doing toward others, we are not friends to ourselves, but traitors and parasites.

By such reflections and comparisons we may, I think, competently understand the nature of that bastard self-love, which is so vicious in itself, and

productive of so many vices: but more fully to display, and withal to dissuade us from this vice, I shall particularly insist upon the common sorts thereof, shewing the peculiar unreasonableness of each, and the mischiefs consequent from it. They are indeed usually combined and complicated in practice, and have much affinity both in their nature and fruit; but I shall, as well as I can, abstract them one from the other, and so treat on them distinctly; they are these: Self-conceit, Self-confidence, Self-complacence, Self-will, Self-interest.

I. The first and most radical kind of vicious self-love is self-conceitedness; that which St Paul calleth *τὸ ὑπερφρονεῖν*, *to overween*, or *to think highly of one's self, beyond what he ought to think*. Rom. xii. 3. This doth consist in several acts or instances.

Sometimes we in our imagination assume to ourselves perfections not belonging to us, in kind or in degree; we take ourselves to be other men than we are; to be wise, to be good, to be happy, when we are not so; at least to be far wiser, better, and happier than we are. The pleasure naturally springing from a good opinion of ourselves doth often so blind our eyes and pervert our judgment, that we see in us what is not there, or see it magnified and transformed into another shape than its own; any appearance doth suffice to produce such mistakes, and, having once entertained them, we are unwilling to depose them; we cannot endure by severe reflection on ourselves to correct such pleasant errors; hence commonly we presume ourselves to be very considerable, very excellent, very extraordinary persons, when in truth we are very mean and worthless: so did St Paul suppose when

SERM. he said, *If a man think himself to be something,*
 I.I. *when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself:* such was
 Gal. vi. 3. the case of that Church in the Apocalypse; *Thou*
 Rev. iii. 17. *sayest, I am rich, and increased in goods, and have*
need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art
wretched and miserable; they were like men in a
 dream, or in a phrensy, who take themselves for
 great and wealthy persons, when, indeed, they are in
 a sorry and beggarly condition: into the like ex-
 travagancies of mistake we are all likely to fall, if
 we do not very carefully and impartially examine
 and study ourselves.

Again; sometimes we make vain judgments
 upon the things we do possess, prizing them much
 beyond their true worth and merit; consequently
 overvaluing ourselves for them; the most trivial and
 pitiful things (things which in themselves have no
 worth, but are mere tools, and commonly serve bad
 purposes; things which do not render our souls
 anywise better, which do not breed any real content,
 which do not conduce to our welfare and happiness)
 we value at a monstrous rate, as if they were the
 most excellent and admirable things in the world.
 Have we wit? how witless are we in prizing it, or
 ourselves for it! although we employ it to no good
 end, not serving God, not benefiting men, not fur-
 thering our own good, or anywise bettering our con-
 dition with it; although we no otherwise use it, than
 vainly to please ourselves or others, that is, to act
 the part of fools or buffoons. Have we learning or
 knowledge? then are we rare persons; not con-
 sidering that many a bad, many a wretched person
 hath had much more than we, who hath used it to
 the abuse of others, to the torment of himself; that

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Rom. i. 21.

hell may be full of learned scribes and subtle disputers, of eloquent orators and profound philosophers; who, *When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened*; not considering also how very defective our knowledge is, how mixed with error and darkness; how useless and vain, yea how pernicious it is, if not sanctified by God's grace, and managed to his service. Have we riches? then are we brave men, as fine and glorious in our conceit as in our outward attire; although the veriest fools, the basest and most miserable of men, that go on the ground, do exceed us therein; although, as Aristotle saith, *Most either not use it, or abuse it*ⁱ; although our wealth affordeth us no real benefit or comfort, but exposeth us to numberless snares, temptations, and mischiefs; although it hath no stability, but easily may be taken from us. Have we reputation? how doth that make us highly to repute ourselves in a slavish imitation of others! yet nothing is less substantial, nothing is less felt, nothing is so easily lost, nothing is more brittle and slippery than it; a bubble is not sooner broken, or a wave sunk, than is the opinion of men altered concerning us. Have we power? what doth more raise our minds! yet what is that commonly but a dangerous instrument of mischief to others, and of ruin to ourselves; at least an engagement to care and trouble? What

ⁱ Τῶν γὰρ πολλῶν, οἱ μὲν οὐ χρῶνται τῇ πλούτῳ, διὰ μικρολογίαν, οἱ δὲ παραχρῶνται δι' ἀσωτίαν.—Arist. apud Plut. in Pelop. [Opp. Tom. II. p. 331. Ed. Reisk.]

^k Ardua res hæc est, opibus non tradere mores.—

Mart. XI. [5, 3.]

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LI.

but that did render Caligula, Nero, and Domitian so hurtful to others, so unhappy themselves? what but that hath filled the world with disasters, and turned all history into tragedy? Have we prosperous success in our affairs? then we boast and triumph in our hearts; not remembering what the

Prov. i. 32. Wise Man saith, *The prosperity of fools destroyeth them*; and that experience sheweth, prosperity doth usually either find or make us fools¹; that the

2 Chron. xxxii. 25. wisest men (as Solomon), the best men (as Hezekiah), have been befooled by it: thus are we apt to overvalue our things, and ourselves for them.

There is no way, indeed, wherein we do not thus impose upon ourselves, either assuming false, or misrating true advantages; the general ill consequences of which misdemeanour are, that our minds are stuffed with dreams and fantastic imaginations, instead of wise and sober thoughts; that we misbehave ourselves toward ourselves, treating ourselves like other men than we are, with unseemly regard; that we expect other men should have like opinions, and yield answerable deferences to us; and are, if we find it otherwise, grievously offended; that we are apt to despise or disregard others, demeaning ourselves insolently and fastuously toward them; that we are apt to seek and undertake things, which we cannot attain or achieve; that we neglect the succours needful to help or comfort us, and the like: which will appear more plainly by considering the several objects or matters in which self-conceit is exercised; they are especially three: intellectual

¹

Rarus enim ferme sensus communis in illa
Fortuna.— Juv. Sat. viii. [73.]

endowments; moral qualities; advantages of body, fortune, and outward state.

I We are apt to conceit highly of ourselves upon presumption of our intellectual endowments or capacities, whether natural (as wit, fancy, memory, judgment,) or acquired, (as learning, skill, experience,) especially of that which is called wisdom^m, which in a manner comprehendeth the rest, and manageth them; whereby we rightly discern what is true, and what is fit to be done in any case proposed: this we are prone in great measure to arrogate, and much to pride ourselves therein. The world is full as it can hold of wise men, or of those who take themselves to be such; not only absolutely, but comparatively, in derogation and preference to all others: may it not be said to us as Job did to his friends, *No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you?* Job. xii. 2. Do we not fancy ourselves incomparably wise, so that all our imaginations are deep and subtle, all our resolutions sound and safe, all our opinions irrefragably certain, all our sayings like so many oracles, or indubitable maxims? Do we not expect that every man's judgment should stoop to ours? do we not wonder that any man should presume to dissent from us? must any man's voice be heard when we speak? Do we not suppose that our authority doth add huge weight to our words? that it is unquestionably true because we say it? that it is presumption, it is temerity, it is rudeness hardly pardonable to contest our dictatesⁿ? This is a common practice, and that which

^m Μωρὸς γενέσθω, ἵνα γένηται σοφός.—1 Cor. iii. 18. Vid. Chrys. in Phil. Or. vii. [Opp. Tom. iv. p. 43.]

ⁿ Οἷον πεπνύσθαι τοὶ δὲ σκιαί ἀίσσουσιν.—

[Hom. Od. x. 495.]

SERM. is often prohibited and blamed in scripture: *Be not*
 LI. *wise in thine own eyes*, saith the Wise Man; and,
 Prov. iii. 7. *Be not wise in your own conceits*, saith the Apostle;
 Rom. xii. 16; and, *I say, through the grace given unto me, to*
 xii. 3. *every man that is among you, not to think of him-*
self more highly than he ought to think; but to
think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every
man the measure of faith.

The great reasonableness of which precepts will appear by considering both the absurdity, and the inconveniences of the practice which they forbid.

If we do reflect either upon the common nature of men, or upon our own constitution, we cannot but find our conceits of our wisdom very absurd: for how can we take ourselves for wise, if we observe the great blindness of our mind, and feebleness of human reason, by many palpable arguments discovering itself? if we mark how painful the search, and how difficult the comprehension is of any truth; how hardly the most sagacious can descry any thing, how easily the most judicious mistake; how the most learned everlastingly dispute, and the wisest irreconcilably clash about matters seeming most familiar and facile; how often the most wary and steady do shift their opinions; how the wiser a man is, and the more experience he gaineth, the less confident he is in his own judgment, and the more sensible he groweth of his weakness; how dim the sight is of the most perspicacious, and how shallow the conceptions of the most profound; how narrow is the horizon of our knowledge, and how immensely the region of our ignorance is distended; how imperfectly and uncertainly we know those few things

to which our knowledge reacheth^o; how answerably SERM. LI.
 to such experience we are told in sacred writ, that, Jer. x. 14. Ps. xciv.
Every man is brutish in his knowledge; that, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are II. I Cor. iii. 20.
vanity; that, Vain man would be wise, though he be
born like an ass's colt, (that is, he is naturally wild
and stupid;) that, Wisdom is hid from the eyes of Job xi. 12; xxviii. 21, 12.
all men, and is not found in the land of the living;
that, The thoughts of mortal men are miserable, and Wisd. ix. 14.
our devices uncertain: if we, I say, do consider
 such things, how can we but find it strange that
 any man should admire his own wisdom, seeing that
 he thereby doth exempt himself from the common
 adjunct of his nature, and forgetteth himself to be
 a man?

If also a man particularly reflecteth on himself,
 the same practice must needs appear very foolish;
 for that every man thence may discover in himself
 peculiar impediments of wisdom; every man in his
 complexion and in his condition may find things apt
 to pervert his judgment, and obstruct his acquisition
 of true knowledge. Is his temper sanguine? thence
 becometh he quick, rash, credulous, confident and
 peremptory, slippery and fickle: is it phlegmatic?
 thence is he slow and heavy; diffident, pertinacious,
 and stiff in his conceits: his mind is either soft and
 limber, so as easily to receive the impressions of
 falsehood speciously represented; or hard and tough,
 so that he cannot readily admit instruction in truth,
 or correction of error. His wealth distracteth, or his
 poverty disturbeth his thoughts; prosperity swelleth

^o Quamcunque partem rerum humanarum divinarumque com-
 prehenderis, ingenti copia quærendorum ac discendorum fatiga-
 beris.—Sen. Ep. LXXXVIII. [30.]

SERM.
LI.

his mind up into vain presumptions and satisfactions, or adversity sinketh it down into unreasonable despondencies and dislikes of things; plenty breedeth sloth, want createth trouble, indisposing him to think well; ease doth rust his parts, and business weareth them out; inclination, interest, company, prejudice, do forcibly sway his apprehensions; so that no man can get himself into, or keep himself steady in a perfect balance, requisite for exact judgment of things; no man therefore can obtain a degree of wisdom, whereof he may with any reason be conceited; the wisest men surely upon such experience have been little satisfied with their share; *Surely, saith one, I am more brutish than any man, and I have not the understanding of a man; and, So foolish, said another, was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee:* this conceitedness therefore is very absurd, and an argument of notable ignorance and folly; neither is there perhaps any more plain instance or demonstration of general folly reigning among men than this, that commonly we are so blind and stupid as not to discern and resent our own folly: *If any man, saith St Paul, thinketh that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth not any thing yet as he ought to know;* that is, if any man conceiteth himself to be considerably wise or intelligent, it is a plain sign that he is very ignorant, and understandeth little to any purpose.

1 Cor. viii.
2.

So it is, if we consider ourselves singly; and it is more so in comparison to others; for what ground can a man have of arrogating to himself a peculiarity of wisdom or judgment? to deem himself extraordinary in that, to which there are no other than ordinary means of arriving? to fancy himself

wiser than any other, whenas (secluding accidental differences, that cannot be accounted for) all men have the same parts and faculties of soul, the same means and opportunities of improvement, the same right and liberty of judging about things? Did not he, *Who formeth the spirit of man within him*, put into every man that heavenly mark, whereby we discern and judge of things? is not every man concerned in that saying of Elihu, *There is a spirit in men^p, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding?* Do not the fountains of knowledge (natural delight, divine revelation, human instruction, continual experience) stand open to all; and are no less common to men than is the air they breathe, and the sun which equally shineth on them all? Is God, the donor of wisdom, partial in the distribution of it? doth not that overture reach indifferently to all, *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally,—and it shall be given him?* may not others be as inquisitive, as industrious, as sincere as we in the search of truth? why not then as successful in finding it? Is there any private chink, through which light shineth only upon us, or truth may be espied? is there any cunning by-path, in which we alone, with more expedition and security than others in the common roads, can travel on toward knowledge? What patents have we to shew for a monopoly of reason? what right have we to engross any knowledge? who hath granted us a privilege of sure judgment, or an exemption from error? how can we in trial of things claim more than a single vote? or why should our word have more weight than any other? may not

SERM.
LI.

Zech. xii. 1.

Job xxxii.
8.

James i. 5.

^p 'Εν βροτοῖς.—LXX.

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LI.

any man with as much reason prefer his judgment before ours, as we before his? and if we blame him for it, do we not thereby condemn ourselves for doing the like? if we do know but the same things, or frame the same judgments with others, how can we be conceited of that which is promiscuous? if we pretend to abstruse notions, or hold forth paradoxes, how can that be ground of boasting, seeing the cause standeth contested by authority no less than our own, and that it is vain to triumph over the opinions of others before we have conquered them? why in such cases is it not reasonable to presume, that among the many dissenters from us, there are some who have as much sense as we, and who have weighed the matter with no less care, no less indifferency? In fine, may not any man with good cause propound to us that expostulation in Job xv. 8, *Job: Hast thou heard the secret of God? and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself? What knowest thou, that we know not? what understandest thou, which is not in us?*

Such conceitedness therefore is very absurd; and it is no less hurtful; for many great inconveniences, many sad mischiefs spring from it, such as gave the Prophet cause to denounce, *Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own conceit:* it hath many ways bad influence on our souls and on our lives; it is often our case, which was the case of Babylon, when the Prophet said of it, *Thy wisdom and thy knowledge hath perverted thee; for thou hast said in thy heart, I am, and none else beside me.*

It is a great bar to the getting wisdom, to the receiving instruction and right information about

things^q; for he that taketh himself to be abundantly knowing, or incomparably wise, will not care to learn, will scorn to be taught; he thence becometh more incapable of wisdom than a mere idiot; so did Solomon observe, *Seest thou, said he, a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him:* ^{Prov. xxvi. 12.} of a fool, that is sensible of his ignorance, there may be hope that he may by instruction become wise; but he that taketh himself to want no instruction, or to be above learning, is in a desperate condition^r.

It rendereth men in doubtful or difficult cases unwilling to seek, and unapt to take advice; he will not care for or admit any counsellor but himself; hence he undertaketh and easily is deceived, and incurreth disappointment, damage, disasters in his affairs. As it is most incident to weak, inconsiderate, lazy persons, who have not a capacity, will not yield attention, or take pains to get right notions of things, so it doth smother all industry, consideration, and circumspection; for such persons think they need no labour in searching truth, no care in weighing arguments, no diligence in observing things; they can easily at first sight descry all, and penetrate to the bottom of things; they have at easy rates the pleasure of fancying themselves wise; why should they spend further pains to dispossess themselves of that pleasure, or to introduce another less satisfactory? thus, *The sluggard,* ^{Prov. xxvi. 16.} as Solomon saith, *is wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason.*

^q Hæc est hominis vera sapientia, imperfectum esse se nosse.—Hier. adv. Pelag. Lib. i. [Opp. Tom. iv. p. ii. col. 492.]

^r Puto multos potuisse ad sapientiam pervenire, nisi putassent se pervenisse.—Sen. de Tranq. An. [cap. i. 11.]

SERM.
LI.

It rendereth us very rash and precipitant in judging; for the first shows of things, or the most slender arguments, which offer themselves, being magnified, and aggravated from opinion concerning ourselves, do sway our judgment, and draw forth a sudden resolution from us; it must, we presently suppose, be very reasonable, because it seemeth reasonable to us.

Hence also we persist obstinate and incorrigible in error; for what reason can be efficacious to reclaim him whose opinion is the greater reason? what argument can be ponderous enough to outweigh his authority? how can he (the man of wisdom, the perspicacious and profound person) yield that he hath erred? how can he part with the satisfaction of being always in the right, or endure the affront of being any time baffled?

It rendereth men peevish and morose, so as to bear nobody that dissenteth from them, nor to like any thing which doth not hit their fancy; to cross their opinion or humour, is to derogate from their wisdom; and being in their apprehension so injured, they find cause to be angry.

It rendereth them insolent, and imperious in conversation, so as to dictate, and impose their conceits upon others. He that is conceited of his own wisdom, will imagine that, upon that advantage, he hath a right to prescribe others an obligation to submit; *eo ipso* he becometh a common master and judge; and they are culpable, who will not yield him a credulous ear, who will not stand to his decision.

Hence also do men become so carping and censorious; for if any man's words do not jump with

their notions, if any man's actions be not conformable to their rules, they straightway rise up to condemn them of folly, of faultiness.

SERM.
LI.

Yea, hence men become intolerably pragmatical; for they conceit themselves better to know another's concernments than he himself doth, and so will intrude his advice, will be angry if his advice be not followed.

To such inconveniences and iniquities this ill disposition exposeth us, and to many others; for it is, indeed, that in effect, which the Holy Scripture representeth as the source of all impious and wicked courses; to which men betray themselves, while, taking themselves to be wise, they do stiffly adhere to their own imaginations and devices, although contrary to the prescriptions of divine wisdom, to the dictates of common reason, to the admonitions of sober and good men; *We will, say they in the Prophet, walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart; and, I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people; which walketh in a way that is not good, after their own thoughts: and, If he blesseth himself, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart: and, So I gave them unto their own hearts' lust, and they walked in their own counsels.* These are descriptions of bad men, implying self-conceit to be the root of their impiety.

Jer. xiii.
10; vi. 19.

Isai. lxv. 2;
liii. 6.

Deut. xxix.
19.

Ps. lxxxxi.
12.
Prov. i. 30,

31.
Isai. lxvi. 4.

2 Again, we are apt to conceit highly and vainly of our moral qualities and performances; taking ourselves for persons rarely good, perfect, and blameless; apprehending no defects in our souls, or miscarriages in our lives, although, indeed, we are as full of blemishes, we are as guilty of

SERM. LI. faults as others; *There is, saith the Wise Man, a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness;* to this generation we belong, if we admire our virtues, if we justify our lives, if (as it is said of the Pharisee) we trust in ourselves that we are righteous.

Prov. xxx. 12.
Luke xviii. 9; xvi. 15; x. 29.

This practice doth include great folly, and it produceth great mischiefs.

It is very foolish, and argueth the greatest ignorance that can be; for such is the imperfection, the impotency, the impurity of all men, even of the wisest and best men, (discernible to them who search their hearts and try their ways, strictly comparing them to the rules of duty, God's laws, and the dictates of reason,) that no man can have reason to be satisfied in himself or in his doings: every man looking into himself shall find his mind so pestered with vain and filthy thoughts; his will so perverse, so froward, so weak, so unsteady; his desires so fond and unwarrantable; his passions so disorderly and ungovernable; his affections so misplaced, or at least so cold and dull in regard to their right objects; his resolutions toward good so weak and slack; his intentions so corrupt, or mixed with oblique regards; he that observeth his actions, shall in the best of them (as to the principles whence they rise, as to the ends they drive at, as to the manner of their performance) find so many great defailances, that he will see cause rather to abhor than to admire himself.

Who, let me ask, doth love God with all his soul^s, so as to place in him his total content and

^s Hier. in Lucif. cap. vi. [Conveniat unusquisque cor suum, et in omni vita inveniet, quam rarum sit fidelem animam inveniri,

delight, so as to do all things out of love to him, with a regard to his honour and service? so as to be willing and glad to part with all things for his sake? who hath that constant and lively sense of God's benefits and mercies that he should have? who hath a perfect resignation of will to his pleasure, so as to be displeased with no event dispensed by his hand? who hath such a vigour of faith and confidence in him, as will support him in all wants, in all distresses, in all temptations, so as never to be disquieted or discouraged by them, so as to cast on God (as he is commanded) all the cares of his soul and burdens of his life? who constantly maintaineth a fervour of spirit, a steadiness of resolution, a clear and calm frame of soul, an abstractedness of mind from worldly desires and delights? who continually is fervent and undistracted in his devotion? who with an unwearied and incessant diligence doth watch over his thoughts? who doth entirely command his passions, and bridle his appetites? who doth exactly govern his tongue? who is perpetually circumspect over his actions? who loveth his neighbour as himself, seeking his good, and delighting therein as in his own; being sorry for his adversities, as if they had befallen himself? who feeleth that contrition of spirit, that shame, that remorse for his sins, or that detestation of them, which they deserve? who is duly sensible of his own unworthiness? Very few of us surely, if we examine our consciences, can answer, that we are they who perform these duties; and if not, where is any ground of self-conceit?

1 Pet. v. 7.

ut nihil ob gloriæ cupiditatem, nihil ob rumusculos hominum faciat.
—Opp. Tom. iv. p. ii. col. 299.]

SERM. how much cause rather is there of dejection, of dis-
 LI. pleasure, of despising and detesting ourselves!

There have, indeed, been sects of men^t (such as the Novatians and the Pelagians) who have pretended to perfection and purity; but these men, one would think, did never read the Scripture, did never consult experience, did never reflect on their minds, did never compare their practice with their duty; had no conscience at all, or a very blind and stupid one. *Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?* was a question of Solomon, to the which he thought no man could answer affirmatively of himself: *If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me; if I say I am perfect, it shall prove me perverse*; was the asseveration of that person, whose virtue had undergone the severest trials: *In many things we offend all*, was the confession of an Apostle in the name of the wisest and best men.

Such men, indeed, (in contemplation of themselves and of their doings) have ever been ready to think meanly of themselves, to acknowledge and bewail their unworthiness, to disclaim all confidence in themselves, to avow their hope wholly to be reposed in the grace and mercy of God; (in his grace for ability to perform somewhat of their duty; in his mercy for pardon of their offences;) to confess themselves, with Jacob, less than the least of God's mercies; with David, that they are worms, and no men; with Job, that they are vile, and unable to answer God calling them to account,

Gen. xxxii.
 10.
 Ps. xxii. 6.
 Job xl. 4;
 xlii. 6; ix.
 2, 3.

^t The Donatists—*Remissionem peccatorum sic datis, quasi nullum habeatis ipsi peccatum, &c.*—Optat. Lib. II. [Cap. xx. p. 44.]

in one case of a thousand; that they abhor themselves, and repent in dust and ashes; that after they have done all, they are unprofitable servants. SERM. LI. Luke xvii. 10. And is he not very blind who doth see in himself those perfections which the greatest saints could not descry in themselves? is he not infinitely vain that fancieth himself more worthy than they did take themselves to be?

In fine, every man is in some kind and degree bad, sinful, vile; it is as natural for us to be so, as to be frail, to be sickly, to be mortal: there are some bad dispositions common to all, and which no man can put off without his flesh; there are some, to which every man (from his temper, inclination, and constitution of body or soul,) is peculiarly subject, the which by no care and pain can be quite extirpated, but will afford during life perpetual matter of conflict and exercise to curb them: conceit therefore of our virtue is very foolish.

And it breedeth many great mischiefs.

Hence doth spring a great security, and carelessness of correcting our faults; for taking ourselves to be well, we see not any need of cure, Matt. ix. 12. John ix. 41. thence seek none, nor admit any.

Yea, hence riseth a contempt of any means conducive to our amendment, such as good advice and wholesome reproof; to advise such an one is to accuse him wrongfully, to reprove him is to commit an outrage upon his presumed integrity of virtue. Hence also proceedeth a neglect of imploring the grace and mercy of God; for why should persons of so great strength crave succour? how should they beg pardon, who have so little sense of guilt? It is for a weak person to cry,

SERM. Lord help me; it is for a publican to pray, *God be*
 LI. *merciful unto me a sinner.*

Luke xviii.
 13.

Luke xviii.
 11, 12.

It breedeth arrogance and presumption even in devotions, or addresses to God, inducing such persons in unseemly manner to justify themselves before God, to claim singular interest in him, to mind him, and as it were to upbraid him with their worthy deeds, to thank him for their imaginary excellencies, like the conceited Pharisee; *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers—I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I possess.* They cannot demean themselves toward God as miserable sinners, who fancy themselves as admirable worthies, and gal-lants in virtue.

Luke xviii.
 9.

Also, a natural result thereof is a haughty contempt of others, venting itself in a supercilious and fastuous demeanour; so it was in the Pharisees, *Who, saith St Luke, trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.* Such persons, observing or suspecting defects and misbehaviours in others, but discerning none in themselves, do in their opinion advance themselves above their brethren, and accordingly are prone to behave themselves toward them: such men as they are, the especially good men, the godly, the saints, the flower of mankind, the choice ones, the darlings of God, and favourites of Heaven, the special objects of divine love and care: others are impure and profane, rejectaneous and reprobate people, to whom God beareth no good-will or regard; hence proceedeth a contemptuous disregard or estranged-ness toward other men; like that of those separatists in the Prophet, who, notwithstanding they

were a people provoking God to anger continually to his face, were yet, in conceit of their own special purity, ready to say, *Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou*: whereas those who, soberly reflecting on their nature, their hearts, their ways, do frame a right judgment of themselves, can hardly esteem any man worse than themselves; they perceive themselves so frail, so defectuous, so culpable, as to find great reason for their compliance with those apostolical precepts; *In lowliness of mind, let each man esteem others better than himself; In honour prefer one another.*

SERM.
LI.Isai. lxxv.
3, 5.

Phil. ii. 3.

Rom. xii.
10.

This likewise disposeth men to expect more than ordinary regard from others; and they are much displeased, if they find it not in degree answerable to their conceit of themselves; taking them for silly, envious, or injurious persons, who forbear to yield it: such excellent persons must in all things be humoured, and cockered, otherwise you greatly wrong them.

Hence also such men easily become discontented and impatient; for if they be crossed in any thing, if any misfortune toucheth them, they take it very ill; supposing they deserve it not, but are worthy of better usage and fortune.

In fine, as this causeth a man to behave himself untowardly in respect to all others, (toward God and toward his neighbour,) so thence he most unbecomingly carrieth himself toward himself; he is no faithful friend, no good companion to himself, but a fond minion, a vile flatterer, or a profane idolater of himself: for (like Narcissus) being transported with conceit of his own incomparable beauty or excellency, he maketh love to and courteth

SERM.
LI.

Ps. xxxvi.
2.

himself; finding delight in such conceit, he by all means cherisheth it, glozing and flattering himself (as the Psalm hath it) in his own eyes; representing his qualities to his imagination in false shapes, he devoutly adoreth those idols of his brain. Further,

3 Self-conceit is also frequently grounded upon other inferior advantages; upon gifts of nature, (as strength, activity, beauty;) upon gifts of fortune, (so called,) as birth, wealth, dignity, power, fame, success; upon these things men ordinarily much value themselves, and are strangely puffed up with vain opinion, taking themselves from them to be great and happy persons: but seeing (as we touched before) these things are in themselves little valuable, (as serving no great purpose, nor furthering our true happiness;) seeing they are not commendable, (as not depending on our free choice, but proceeding from nature or chance;) seeing they are not durable or certain, but easily may be severed from us; the vanity of self-conceit founded on them is very notorious, and I shall not insist more to declare it; I shall only recommend the Prophet's advice concerning such things: *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth:* that is, nothing within us or about us should elevate our minds, excepting the assurance that God doth govern the world, being ready to protect and succour us, to dispense mercy and justice to us; so that how

Jer. ix. 23,
24.

weak and helpless soever in ourselves, yet, confiding in him, we shall never be overwhelmed by any wrong or misfortune. SERM.
LI.

So much concerning self-conceit; the other parts of vicious self-love may be reserved to another occasion.

SERMON LII.

OF SELF-CONFIDENCE, SELF-COMPLACENCE,
SELF-WILL, AND SELF-INTEREST, &c.

2 TIM. III. 2.

For men shall be lovers of themselves, &c.

SERM.
LII.

II. **A**NOTHER like culpable kind of self-love is that of Self-confidence; when men beyond reason, and without regard unto God's providence, do rely upon themselves and their own abilities, imagining that, without God's direction and help, by the contrivances of their own wit and discretion, by the prevalency of their own strength and courage, by their industrious care, resolution, and activity, they can compass any design, they can attain any good, they can arrive to the utmost of their desires, and become sufficiently happy^a; not considering, that of
Dan. v. 23. God (*In whose hand our breath is, and whose are all*
Job xii. 10. *our ways; In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind*) all our being and all our ability do absolutely depend; that he manageth and turneth all things, dispensing success according to his pleasure; that no good thing can be performed without the supply and succour of his grace, nothing can be achieved without the concur-

^a

Ὅστις γὰρ αὐτὸς ἢ φρονεῖν μόνος δοκεῖ,
ἢ γλῶσσαν, ἣν οὐκ ἄλλος ἢ ψυχὴν ἔχειν,
οὗτοι διαπτυχθέντες ὥφθησαν κενοί.—

Soph. Antig. [707.]

rence of his providence; that, *The way of man is* SERM. LII.
not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct
his steps; that, The preparations of the heart in Jer. x. 23.
man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Prov. xvi. 1, 9; xix. 21; xx. 24.
Lord; that, although A man's heart deviseth his
way, yet the Lord directeth his steps; that, No king Ps. xxxiii. 16, 17.
is saved by the multitude of an host, a mighty man
is not delivered by much strength, a horse is a vain
thing for safety; The race is not to the swift, nor the Eccles. ix. 11.
battle to the strong; that (as St Paul, one abund-
antly furnished with abilities suiting his designs as
any man can be, doth acknowledge) We are not 2 Cor. iii. 5; ii. 16.
sufficient of ourselves to think any thing, but our
sufficiency is of God: these oracles of truth, and
even dictates of reason, no less than principles of
Religion, they consider not, who confide in their
own abilities, with which nature or fortune do seem
to have furnished them.

This is that instance of self-love, which the
 Wise Man biddeth us to beware of: *Trust, saith* Prov. iii. 5, 6.
he, in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to
thine own understanding; in all thy ways acknow-
ledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. This is
 that which he condemneth as foolish, and opposite
 to wise proceeding: *He that trusteth in his own* Prov. xxviii. 26.
heart is a fool; but whoso walketh wisely shall be
delivered.

This is that which smothereth devotion, and
 keepeth men from having recourse to God; while
 they think it needless to ask for that which they
 have in their power, or have means of obtaining^b;
 this consequently depriveth them of divine aid,

^b

Æquum mî animum ipse parabo.—

[Hor. Ep. I. 18. 112.]

SERM. LII. which is afforded only to those who seek it, and confide therein.

This often engageth men to attempt things rashly, and causeth them to come off unhappily; God interposing to cross them, with purpose to cure their error, or confound their presumption.

From hence, if God ever suffereth their attempt to prosper, they sacrilegiously and profanely arrogate to themselves the success, sacrificing to their own net, and saying with him in the Prophet, *By the strength of my hand have I done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent.*

Habak. i.
16.
Isai. x. 13.

This causeth most men to fail of true content here, and of happiness finally; while taking them to be, where they are not, at home, within their own hand or reach, they neglect to search after them abroad, there where they only do lie, in the hand and disposal of God.

III. A like act of blameable self-love is Self-complacence, that is, greatly delighting in one's self, or in the goods which he fancieth himself to enjoy, or in the works which he performeth; when men, in contemplation of their works and achievements, go strutting about, and saying with that vain prince, *Is not this great Babylon, that I have built?* when, reflecting on their possessions, they applaud and bless themselves, like the rich man in the Gospel, *Soul, (saith he, looking upon his accumulated store,) thou hast much goods laid up for many years.* Such vain soliloquies do men ordinarily make! Thou hast (saith a man to himself) rare endowments of soul; a wonderful skill and ability in this and that matter; thou art master of excellent things; thou hast managed very important business, hast accom-

Dan. iv. 30.

Luke xii.
19.

plished hard designs, hast achieved brave feats, with great dexterity and admirable success, by thy wit and industry; thou hast framed and vented very curious orations, very facetious speeches, very nervous and pithy discourses; thou hast put obligations upon this man and that; thou hast got much credit and interest amongst men; the world much looketh on thee, loveth and prizeth thee hugely, resoundeth with thy fame and praise; surely thy worth is notable, thy deserts are egregious; how happy art thou in being such a person, in performing such things, in enjoying such advantages! Thus with a spurious and filthy pleasure do men reflect upon and revolve in their minds the goods they deem themselves to possess, and the favourable occurrences that seem to befall them; being fond of their own qualities and deeds as of their children, which, however they are in themselves, do always appear handsome and towardly unto them; any little thing is great and eminent, any ordinary thing is rare, any indifferent thing is excellent to them, because it is theirs; out of any thing, how dry and insipid soever it is in itself, they suck a vain and foolish pleasure.

Hence is that honest and pure delight which they should taste in faith and love toward God, in the hope of future celestial things, in the enjoyment of spiritual blessings, in the conscience of virtuous practice, quite choked or greatly damped.

Hence also that hearty contrition and sober sadness, which, by reflection upon their great defects and frequent miscarriages, they should continually maintain in their souls, is utterly stifled.

Hence also that charitable complacency in the

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LII.

welfare, and condolency with the adversities of their brethren, is suppressed; hence cannot they be satisfied with any thing done by others, they cannot apprehend the worthy deserts, they cannot render due commendation to the good deeds of their neighbour; for while men are so pleased with their own imaginary felicities, they cannot well discern, they will not be duly affected with, the real advantages or disasters of themselves or of others.

IV. Another culpable kind of self-love is Self-will, (*αὐθάδεια*, pleasing one's self in his choice, and proceeding without or against reason;) when a man unaccountably or unreasonably, with obstinate resolution, pursueth any course offensive to others or prejudicial to himself, so that he will not hearken to any advice, nor yield to any consideration diverting him from his purpose, but putteth off all with a—*Sit pro ratione voluntas*^c: Say what you can, let what will come on it, I will do as I please, I will proceed in my own way; so I am resolved, so it shall be^d.

This is that generally which produceth in men the wilful commission of sin, although apparently contrary to their own interest and welfare, depriving them of the best goods, bringing on them most heavy mischiefs; this causeth them irreclaimably to persist in impenitence. Hence do they stop their ears against wholesome counsel; they harden their hearts against most pathetical and softening dis-

^c [Juv. VI. 223.]

^d Περὶ ὧν ἂν ἅπαξ τι εἴπω, μηκέτι μου αὐθις πύθη.—Nero apud Dion. Cass. [Lib. LXII. cap. 13. Tom. II. p. 1011.]

Οἱ ἀμαθεῖς ἰσχυρογνώμονες.—Synes. Calv. [Verbatim. Καὶ γὰρ ἀμαθεῖς ὄντες, ἰσχυρογνώμονές εἰσι.—Calvitii Encon. Opp. p. 71 D.]

Vid. Sen. Ep. XXIII. de Benef. IV. 38. Epict. Diss. II. 15.

courses: they withdraw their shoulder; they stiffen their neck against all sober precepts, admonitions, and reproofs; they defeat all means and methods of correction; they will not hear God commanding, entreating, promising, threatening, encouraging, chastising; they will not regard the advices and reprehensions of friends; the most apparent consequences of damage, disgrace, pain, perdition, upon their ill courses will not stir them; their will is impregnable against the most powerful attempts to win and better them: let all the wisdom in the world solicit them, with a *Turn at my reproof*; it shall have occasion to complain, *They would none of my counsel, they despised all my reproof*.

SERM.
LII.

Neh. ix. 29.
Jer. vii. 26;

v. 3.
Deut. xxxi.
27.
Prov. i. 25;

i. 23, 25,

29.

This is that also more particularly, which breedeth so much mischief to the public, which pestereth and disturbeth private conversation: this maketh conversation harsh, and friendship intolerable^e.

Hence are men in their demeanour so peevish and froward, so perverse and cross-grained, so stiff and stubborn^f; with much inconvenience to others, and commonly with more to themselves.

Hence will they not submit to the commands of their superiors, they will not comply with the customs of their country, they will not be complaisant in conversation; but every where raise factious oppositions, kindle fierce contentions, maintain disorderly singularities: they care not how, for enjoying their humour, they break the peace of the world,

^e τούτῳ δ' ἀνδρὶ μήτ' εἶην φίλος
Μήτε ξυνείην, ὅστις αὐτάρκη φρονεῖν
Πέποιθε, δούλους τοὺς φίλους ἡγούμενος.—

Eurip. [Æol. Frag. xiv.]

^f Αὐθάδεια ἐρημιά ξύνοικος.—

Plat. ad Dion. Ep. iv. [321 c.]

SERM.
LII.

they disturb the order of things, they create tumults and troubles in any society, they bring vexations and mischiefs on others, on themselves. They do not consider or value the great harm they bring upon the public, nor how much themselves do suffer by it; so they have their will, what if the state be plunged into confusion and trouble; what if their neighbours be sorely incommoded; what if themselves lose their ease and pleasure?

It must be just as they will have it; what if ten to one think otherwise; what if generally the wisest men are agreed to the contrary; what if the most pressing necessity of affairs do not admit it; what if public authority (those whom all equity doth constitute judges, and to whom God himself hath committed the arbitration thereof) do not allow it? yet so it must be, because they fancy it, otherwise they will not be quiet: so do they sacrifice the greatest benefits of society (public order and peace, mutual love and friendship, common safety and prosperity) to their private will and humour.

This is that which St Paul so often did forbid in word, and discountenanced in practice: for the edification of others, to procure advantage to his endeavours, to shun offence, to preserve concord and amity, he waved pleasing his own desire and fancy, he complied with the conceits and humours even of those who were most ignorant and weak in judgment; he even subjected and enslaved himself to the pleasure of others, directing us to do the like:

Rom. xv. 1,
2, 3.

We then, saith he, that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves: let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification; for even Christ pleased not himself,

(he adjoineth the great example of our Lord to enforce his own). Again; *Give none offence*, saith he, *even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of the many, that they may be saved: Be ye (herein) followers of me, as I am of Christ: and again, To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some: Though I be free from all men, (that is, although I have no superior that can command me, or oblige me in these matters,) yet have I made myself servant to all, that I might gain the more.* What this excellent person was in this instance of managing ecclesiastical discipline, and promoting the Gospel, that, both in the same cases, and in the prosecution of all other designs, in all our conversation and practice, should we likewise be.

We should in no case indulge our own humour or fancy, but ever look to the reason of the thing, and act accordingly, whatever it requireth.

We should never act without striving with competent application of mind to discern clearly some reason why we act; and from observing the dictates of that reason, no unaccountable cause should pervert us: blind will, headstrong inclination, impetuous passion, should never guide, or draw, or drive us to any thing; for this is not to act like a man, but as a beast, or rather worse than a beast; for beasts operate by a blind instinct indeed, but such as is planted in them by a superior wisdom, unerringly directing them to a pursuit of their true good: but man is left *in manu concilii sui*, is obliged (under sore penalties) not to follow blind inclinations or instinct; but to act with serious deliberation

SERM.
LII.I Cor. x.
33; xi. 1.I Cor. ix.
22, 19.Wisd. i. 12.
Deut. xxx.
19.

SERM. and choice, to observe explicit rules and reso-
LII. lutions of reason.

V. Another culpable sort of self-love is that of
I Cor. x. Self-interest^s; when men inordinately or immode-
24. rately do covet and strive to procure for themselves
these worldly goods, merely because profitable or
pleasant to themselves, not considering or regarding
the good of others, according to the rules of justice,
of humanity, of Christian charity; when their
affections, their cares, their endeavours do mainly
tend to the advancement, advantage, or delight of
themselves; they little caring what cometh on it,
who loseth, who suffereth thereby.

They look upon themselves as if they were all
the world, and no man beside concerned therein, or
considerable to them; that the good state of things
is to be measured by their condition; that all is
well, if they do prosper and thrive; all is ill, if they
are disappointed in their desires and projects.

The good of no man, not of their brethren, not
of their friends, not of their country, doth come
with them under consideration; what scandals do
arise, what disorders are committed, what mischiefs
are caused, they matter not, if they get somewhat
thereby: what if the Church or State be reproached,
what if the neighbourhood be offended or disturbed,
what if the world cry out and complain, if they
become richer by it, or have their passion gratified,
or find some pleasure in it?

This is the chief spring of injustice; for from
hence it is, that oftentimes men regard not what
courses they take, what means they use, (how
unjust, how base soever they be,) toward the

^s Vid. Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. xxv. [Opp. Tom. III. p. 405.]

compassing their designs ; hence they trample upon right, they violate all laws and rules of conscience, they falsify their trusts, they betray their friends, they supplant their neighbour, they flatter and colloque, they wind about and shuffle any way, they detract from the worth and virtue of any man, they forge and vent odious slanders, they commit any sort of wrong and outrage, they (without regard or remorse) do any thing, which seemeth to further their design.

This is the great source of uncharitableness ; for from hence men affect no man otherwise than he seemeth able to serve their turn ; the poor therefore is ever slighted and neglected by them as unserviceable ; the rich only is minded and respected as capable to promote their ends ; they become hard-hearted toward others, not considering or commiserating their case ; they will part with nothing from themselves to those who need their relief ; they delight in nothing which doth not make for their advantage ; all their shows of friendship and respect are mercenary, and mere trade ; they do nothing *gratis*, or for love.

This is the great root of all the disorders and mischiefs in the world ; this self-love prompteth men to those turbulent scramblings and scufflings, whereby good order is confounded ; this engageth them to desert their stations, to transgress their bounds, to invade and encroach upon others with fraud and violence : did men with any conscionable moderation mind and pursue their own private interest, all those fierce animosities, those fiery contentions, those bitter emulations, those rancorous grudges, those calumnious supplantings, those

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perfidious cozenages, those outrageous violences, those factious confederacies, those seditious murmurings and tumultuous clamours, would vanish and cease; self-interest it is that gives life and nourishment to all such practices, the which embroil the world in discord and disorder. It is not out of pure madness or wanton humour that commonly men engage themselves and others in those base and troublesome courses, but out of design to get by it^h; hope of gain to be raked out of public ruins and disorders is the principle that moveth them, the reward they propound to themselves for their pains in meddling, toward the promoting them; like those who set fire on the town, that they may get opportunity to rifle and pillage.

He that taketh himself to be as but one man, (naturally like and equal to others,) conceiving that he ought to consider the interest and right of other men in the same rank with his own, that he in reason should be contented with that share which ariseth to him by fair meansⁱ; who thence resolveth to be satisfied with his own lot, to abide quiet in his station, to yield the same deference and compliance to others which he can presume or pretend to receive from them; who desires only to enjoy the gifts of Providence and the fruits of his industry in a due subordination to the public peace and welfare; he will not easily strive or struggle for preferments, he will not foment emulations or factions for his advantage, he will never

^h

Nullum furor egit in arma.

Bella petunt magna victi mercede.

ⁱ Ut enim quisque maxime ad suum commodum refert, quæcumque agit, ita minime est vir bonus; ut, qui virtutem præmio metiuntur, nullam virtutem nisi malitiam putent, &c.—Cic. de Leg. i. [18. 49.]

design to cozen or supplant, to detract or calumniate for advancement of his ends; he thence will not contribute to the mischiefs and troubles in the world.

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Self-interest therefore is the great enemy to the commonweal; that which perverteth all right, which confoundeth all order, which spoileth all the convenience and comfort of society.

It is a practice indeed (this practice of pursuing self-interest so vehemently, so especially above all things) which is looked upon and cried up as a clear and certain point of wisdom; the only solid wisdom; in comparison whereto those precepts, which prescribe the practice of strict justice, ingenuous humanity, free charity, are but pedantical tattles, or notions merely chimerical; so the world now more than ever seemeth to judge, and accordingly to act; and thence is the state of things visibly so bad and calamitous; thence so little honesty in dealings, thence so little settlement in affairs are discernible. But how false that judgment is will appear if the case be weighed in the balance of pure reason; and most foolish it will appear being scanned according to the principles of Religion.

In reason, is it not very absurd that any man should look upon himself as more than a single person; that he should prefer himself before another, to whom he is not in any respect superior; that he should advance his own concernment above the public benefit, which comprehendeth his good, and without which his good cannot subsist? Can any man rationally conceive, that he can firmly thrive or persist in a quiet and sweet condition, when he graspeth to himself more than is due or fitting,

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when he provoketh against himself the emulation, the competition, the opposition, the hatred, and obloquy of all or of many other persons?

May not any man reasonably have the same apprehensions and inclinations as we may have? may not any man justly proceed in the same manner as we may do? will they not, seeing us mainly to affect our private interest, be induced, and in a manner forced, to do the like? Thence what end can there be of propping and scrambling for things? and in the confusion thence emergent, what quiet, what content can we enjoy?

Again; doth not nature, by implanting in our constitution a love of society and aversion from solitude, inclinations to pity and humanity, pleasant complacencies in obliging and doing courtesies to others, appetites of honour and good esteem from others, aptness to approve and like the practices of justice, of fidelity, of courtesy, of beneficence, capacities to yield succour and benefit to our brethren, dictate unto us, that our good is inseparably connected and complicated with the good of others, so that it cannot without its own impairing subsist alone, or be severed from the good of others; no more than a limb can without suffering and destruction be torn from the whole?

Is there not to all men in some measure, to some men in a higher degree, a generosity innate, most lovely and laudable to all; which disposeth men with their own pain, hazard, and detriment to succour and relieve others in distress, to serve the public, and promote the benefit of society; so that inordinately to regard private interest doth thwart the reason and wisdom of nature?

The frame of our nature, indeed, speaketh, that we are not born for ourselves; we shall find man, if we contemplate him, to be a nobler thing than to have been designed to serve himself, or to satisfy his single pleasure; his endowments are too excellent, his capacities too large for so mean and narrow purposes^k. How pitiful a creature were man, if this were all he was made for! how sorry a faculty were reason, if it served not to better uses! he debaseth himself, he disgraceth his nature, who hath so low conceits, and pursueth so petty designs.

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Rom. ix.

1—3.
(St Paul.)

Nay, even a true regard to our own private good will engage us not inordinately to pursue self-interest; it being much hugged will be smothered and destroyed.

As we are all born members of the world, as we are compacted into the commonwealth, as we are incorporated into any society, as we partake in any conversation or company, so by mutual support, aid, defence, comfort, not only the common welfare first, but our particular benefit consequently doth subsist; by hindering or prejudicing them, the public first, in consequence our particular doth suffer: our thriving by the common prejudice will in the end turn to our own loss. As if one member sucketh too much nourishment to itself, and thence swelleth into an exorbitant bulk, the whole thence incurreth disease, so coming to perish or languish; whence consequently that irregular member will fall into a

^k

Nec sibi, sed toti genitum se credere mundo.—

[Lucan. Phars. II. 383.]

Nullosque Catonis in actus

Subrepsit, partemque tulit sibi nata voluptas.—

[Id. II. 390.]

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participation of ruin or decay: so it is in the state of human corporations; he that in ways unnatural or unjust (for justice is that in human societies, which nature is in the rest of things) draweth unto himself the juice of profit or pleasure, so as thence to grow beyond his due size, doth thereby not only create distempers in the public body, but worketh mischief and pain to himself; he must not imagine to escape feeling somewhat of the inconvenience and misery which ariseth from public convulsions and disorders.

So doth reason plainly enough dictate; and Religion with clearer evidence and greater advantage discovereth the same.

Its express precepts are, that we should aim to love our neighbour as ourselves, and therefore should tender his interests as our own; that we should not in competition with the greater good of our neighbour regard our own lesser good; that we should not seek our own things, but concern ourselves in the good of others; that we should not consult our own ease and pleasure, but should contentedly bear the burdens of our brethren: *Look not every man to his own things, but every man also to the things of others; Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth; Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ; Charity seeketh not its own:* these are apostolical precepts and aphorisms; these are fundamental rules and maxims of our holy Religion.

It chargeth us industriously to employ our pains, liberally to expend our goods, yea (in some cases) willingly to expose and devote our lives for the benefit of our brethren.

It recommendeth to us the examples of those who have underwent unspeakable pains, losses, disgraces, troubles, and inconveniences of all kinds, for the furthering the good of others; the examples of our Lord and of his Apostles, who never in any case regarded their own interests, but spent and sacrificed themselves to the public welfare of mankind.

It representeth us not only as brethren of one family, who should therefore kindly favour, assist, and grace one another, but as members of one spiritual body, (*Members one of another,*) compacted by the closest bands of common alliance, affection, and interest; whose good much consisteth in the good of each other; who should together rejoice, and condole with one another; who should care for one another's good as for our own; looking upon ourselves to gain by the advantage, to thrive in the prosperity, to be refreshed with the joy, to be graced with the honour, to be endamaged by the losses, to be afflicted with the crosses of our brethren; so that, *If, as St Paul saith, one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.*

Rom. xii. 5.
1 Cor. xii.
25.
Rom. xii.
15.

1 Cor. xii.
26.

These are the principal kinds of vicious self-love; there are further some special acts of kin to them, sprouting from the same stock; which I shall touch: such as Vain-glory, Arrogance, Talking of one's self, Thinking about one's self.

I. Vain-glory¹.—When a regard to the opinion, or desire of the esteem of men is the main principle from which their actions do proceed, or the

¹ Μὴ γινώμεθα κενόδοξοι.—Gal. v. 26.

Vid. Chrys. in 2 Cor. Orat. xxix. Opp. Tom. iii. p. 702-3.

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LII.

Matt. vi.
&c. ; xxiii.
5.

Phil. ii. 3.

Ps. xlix.
6.

Rom. ii. 7.

Phil. iii. 19.

chief end which they propound to themselves, instead of conscience, of duty, love and reverence of God, hope of the rewards promised, a sober regard to their true good, this is vain-glory. Such was the vain-glory of the Pharisees, who fasted, who prayed, who gave alms, who did all their works, that they might be seen of men, and from them obtain the reward of estimation and applause: this is that which St Paul forbiddeth; *Let nothing be done out of strife or vain-glory.*

When men affect and delight in praise from mean or indifferent things; as from secular dignity, power, wealth, strength, beauty, wit, learning, eloquence, wisdom, or craft: as, *There are many, saith the Psalmist, that boast themselves in the multitude of their riches.* Nebuchadnezzar was raised with the conceit of having built a palace for the glory of his majesty; Herod was puffed with applause for his oration; the philosophers were vain in the esteem procured by their pretence to wisdom^m; the Pharisees were elevated with the praise accruing from external acts of piety, (fasting twice a week, making long prayers, tithing mint and cumin;) all which things being in themselves of little worth, the affecting of praise from them is manifestly frivolous and vain. Honour should be affected only from true virtue and really good works.

Those who seek glory from evil things, (*Who glory in their shame,*) from presumptuous transgression of God's law, (hectorly profaneness and debauchery,) from outrageous violence, from over-reaching craft.

^m Φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοί.—Rom. i. 22.

When men affect praise immoderately, not being content with that measure of good reputation which naturally doth arise from a virtuous and blameless life. As all other goods, so this should be affected moderately; it is not worth industry, or a direct aim.

When they are unwilling to part with the esteem of men upon any account, but rather will desert their duty than endure disgrace, prizing the opinion of men before the favour and approbation of God; as it is said of those rulers, who believed in our Lord, but because of the Pharisees did not confess him, that they might not be put out of the synagogue, *For they loved the glory of men, rather than the glory that is of God*; and those to whom our Saviour said, *How can ye believe, who receive glory from one another, but do not seek the glory that is of God?*

John xii.

43;

v. 44.

When they pursue it irregularly, are cunning and politic to procure it, hunt for it in oblique ways, lay gins, traps, and baits for it; such are ostentation of things commendable, fair speeches, kind looks and gestures, devoid of sincerity, &c. Such ways ambitious and popular men do use.

This practice is upon many accounts vain and culpableⁿ, and it produceth great inconvenience.

1 It is vain, because unprofitable. Is it not a foolish thing for a man to affect that which little concerneth him to have, which having he is not considerably benefited? Such manifestly is the good opinion of men; how doth that reach us?

ⁿ Τὸ εὐτελὲς τοῦτο δοξάριον καὶ ἀπόπτυστον.—Greg. Naz. [Ep. CLXXVIII. Opp. Tom. II. p. 147 B.]

SERM. LII. Do we feel the commotions of their fancy? doth their breath blow us any good?

2 It is vain, because uncertain^o. How easily are the judgments of men altered! how fickle are their conceits! the wind of heaven is not more fleeting and variable than the wind of popular air. In a trice the case is turned with them; they admire and scorn, they approve and condemn, they applaud and reproach, they court and persecute the same person, as their fancy is casually moved, or as fortune doth favour a person. Histories are full of instances of persons who have been now the favourites of the people, presently the objects of their hatred and obloquy.

3 It is vain, because unsatisfactory^p. How can a man be satisfied with the opinion of bad judges; who esteem a man without good grounds, commonly for things not deserving regard; who cannot discern those things which really deserve esteem, good principles and honest intention? These only God can know, these only wise and good men can well guess at: it is therefore vain much to prize any judgment but that of God and of wise men, which are but few. *Praise becometh not the mouth of a fool.*

Ecclus. xv.
9.

How also can a man rationally be pleased with the commendation of others^q, who is sensible of his

^o Qui dedit hoc hodie, cras, si volet, auferet.—

[Hor. Ep. i. 16. 33.]

^p Stultus honores

Sæpe dat indignis.—

[Id. Sat. i. 6. 15.]

^q Falsus honor juvat, et mendax infamia terret,
Quem nisi mendosum?—

[Id. Ep. i. 16. 39.]

so great defects, and conscious to himself of so many miscarriages? which considering, he should be ashamed to receive, he should in himself blush to own any praise. SERM.
LII.

4 It is vain, because fond. It is ugly and unseemly to men; they despise nothing more than acting out of this principle. It misbecometh a man to perform things for so pitiful a reward, or to look upon it as a valuable recompense for his performances, there being considerations so vastly greater to induce and encourage him; the satisfaction of conscience, the pleasing God, and procuring his favour; the obtaining eternal happiness.

5 It is vain, because unjust. If we seek glory to ourselves, we wrong God thereby, to whom the glory thereof is due. If there be in us any natural endowment considerable, (strength, beauty, wit,) it is from God, the Author of our being and life: is there any supervenient or acquire perfection, (as skill, knowledge, wisdom,) it is from God, who gave us the means and opportunities of getting it, who guided our proceeding and blessed our industry: is there any advantage of fortune belonging to us, (as dignity, power, wealth,) it is the gift of God, who dispenseth these things, who disposeth all things by his providence: is there any virtuous disposition in us, or any good work performed by us, it is the production of God, *Who worketh in us to will and to do according to his good pleasure:* have we any good that we can call our own, that we have independently and absolutely made or purchased to ourselves; if not any, why do we assume to ourselves the glory of it, as if we were its makers or authors? it is St Paul's expostulation; *Who made thee to* Phil. ii.
13.
1 Cor. vi. 7.

SERM.
LII.

John iii.
27.

differ? what hast thou, which thou didst not receive? and if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

Acts xii.
23.

Isai. xlii.
8.

This is that which maketh this vice so odious to God, who is sensible of the injury done him, in robbing him of his due honour: how sensible he is he shewed in that great instance of smiting Herod with a miraculous vengeance; because he did not give the glory to God, but arrogated glory to himself, receiving with complacence the profane flatteries of the people. He hath said, *I will not give my glory to another.*

6 It is vain, because mischievous. It corrupteth our mind with a lewd pleasure, which choketh the purer pleasures of a good conscience, spiritual joy and peace.

It incenseth God's displeasure, who cannot endure to see us act out of so mean and base a principle.

Matt. vi.
1, 2.

It depriveth us of the reward due to good works, performed out of pure conscience, and other genuine principles of piety. Ἀπέχουσι τὸν μισθόν, *They have their reward.*

7 It is vain, because unbecoming us.

It is observable, that the word ללף signifieth to praise or applaud, and also to infatuate or make mad.

Job xii. 17.
Isai. xliv.
25.

Glory doth sit unhandsomely upon us, who are so weak and frail, who are so impure and sinful, who are so liable to reproach and blame: it is like purple on a beggar—a panegyric upon a fly. When all is said that can be well of us, we are ridiculous, because a thousand times more might be said to our disparagement and disgrace. For one good quality

we have many bad, for one good deed we have done numberless evil. The best things we have or do, yield greater matter of dispraise than commendation, being full of imperfection and blemish.

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LII.

Absolutely so; comparatively much more; what are we in comparison to God; whose excellency if we consider, and our distance from his perfections, how can we admit commendation? how can we take any share of that which is wholly his due?

If we consider even the blessed angels and saints, and how far short we come of them; what can we say, but praise them who are so worthy, and abhor ourselves who are so vile?

Seeing there are such objects of praise, how can it be conferred on a mortal, vile, wretched creature?

II. *Arrogance.*—When a man (puffed up with conceit of his own abilities, or unmeasurably affecting himself) doth assume to himself that which doth not belong to him; (more than in reason and justice is his due in any kind, more honour, more power, more wisdom, &c.)

When he encroacheth on the rights, invadeth the liberties, intrudeth into the offices, intermeddleth with the businesses, imposeth on the judgments of others. When he will be advising, teaching, guiding, checking, controlling others, without their leave or liking.

When he will unduly be exercising judgment and censure upon the persons, qualities, and actions of his neighbour.

These are instances and arguments of vicious self-love. He that doth rightly understand and duly affect himself will contain himself within his

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LII.

own bounds, will mind his own affairs, will suffer every man undisturbedly to use his own right and liberty in judging and acting.

The effects of this practice are, dissensions, dissatisfactions, grudges, &c.; for men cannot endure such fond and unjust usurpations upon their rights, their liberties, their reputations.

III. Talking of one's self.—*Περιαυτολογία*, *Talking about one's self* is an effect and manifest sign of immoderate self-love.

To talk much of one's self, of his own qualities, of his concernments, of his actions, so as either downrightly to commend one's self, or obliquely to insinuate grounds of commendation; to catch at praise; or, however, to drive on our own designs and interests thereby.

Matt. xii.
34.

It is an argument of self-love, proceeding from a fulness of thought concerning one's self, and a fond affection to one's own things; (*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*; assuredly we think much of that, and we like it greatly, concerning which we are prompt to discourse: the imaginations and affections discharge themselves at the mouth.)

This is a foolish and hurtful practice. For,
1 It is vain, and hath no effect. We thereby seek to recommend ourselves to the opinion of men; but we fail therein; for our words gain no belief. For no man is looked upon as a good judge or a faithful witness in his own case; a good judge and a faithful witness must be indifferent and disinterested; but every man is esteemed to be favourable, to be partial in his opinion concerning himself; to be apt to strain a point of truth and right in passing

testimony or sentence upon himself: he therefore that speaketh of himself is not believed, his words have no good effect on the hearers: it is true what the Wise Man observeth; *Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness, but a faithful man who can find?* (but it is hard to find one who, in making report or passing judgment concerning himself, will be faithful and just.) *Καυχᾶσθαι οὐ συμφέρει μοι.* SERM. LII.
Prov. xx. 6.
2 Cor. xii. 1.

2 Yea it usually hath a contrary effect, and destroyeth that which it aimeth at. Self-commendation is so far from procuring a good opinion, that it breedeth an evil one.

Men have a prejudice against what is said, as proceeding from a suspected witness; one who is biassed by self-love and bribed by self-interest to impose upon them: *Not he that commendeth himself is approved.* 2 Cor. x. 18.

It is fastidious, as impertinent, insignificant, and insipid^r; spending time, and beating their ears to no purpose; they take it for an injury to suppose them so weak as to be moved by such words, or forced into a good conceit.

It is odious and invidious; for all men do love themselves, no less than we ourselves; and cannot endure to see those who affect to advance themselves and reign in our opinion.

It prompteth them to speak evil of us; to search for faults to cool and check us.

It is therefore a preposterous and vain way to think of gaining credit and love: men thereby infallibly lose or depress themselves.

Of all words those which express ourselves and

^r Ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐχὶ εἰς τὰ ἑμῶν καυχησόμεθα.—2 Cor. x. 13.

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LII.

our things, *I* and *mine*, &c. are the least pleasing to men's ears.

It spoileth conversation; for he that loveth to speak of himself doth least love to hear others speak of themselves, and so is not attentive.

If a man have worthy qualities and do good deeds, let them speak for him; they will of themselves extort commendation; his silence about them, his seeming to neglect them, will enhance their worth in the opinion of men. Prating about them, obtruding them upon men, will mar their credit; inducing men to think them done, not out of love to virtue, but for a vain-glorious design. Thus did Cicero, thus have many others blasted the glory of their virtuous deeds^s.

3 Supposing you get the belief and the praise you aim at, to have complacence therein is bad or dangerous; it is a fond satisfaction, it is a vicious pleasure; it puffeth up, it befooleth.

4 It is against modesty. It argueth the man hath a high opinion of himself: if he believe himself what he saith, he hath so; if not, why would he persuade others to have it?

Modesty cannot without pain hear others speak of him, nor can with any grace receive commendations; it is therefore great impudence to speak of himself, and to seek praise.

5 We may observe it to be a great temptation to speak falsely. Men, when they affect commendation, will gladly have it to the utmost; are loath to wrong themselves, or to lose any thing; they will therefore at least speak to the extreme bounds of what may be said in their own behalf;

^s Γέγονα ἄφρων καυχώμενος.—2 Cor. xii. 11; xi. 17.

and while they run upon the extreme borders of truth, it is hard to stop their career, so as not to launch forth into falsehood: it is hard to stand upon the brink, without falling into the ditch. SERM.
LII.

It is therefore advisable in our discourse to leave ourselves out as much as may be; never, if we can help it, to say, *I, mine, &c.* never seeking, commonly shunning and declining occasion to speak of ourselves: it will bring much convenience and benefit to us.

Our discourse will not be offensive; we shall decline envy and obloquy; we shall avoid being talked of; we shall escape temptations of vanity; we shall better attend to what others say, &c.

If we will be speaking of ourselves, it is allowable to speak sincerely and unaffectedly concerning our infirmities and faults; as St Paul does of himself. 2 Cor. xii.
5; xi. 30.

There are some cases wherein a man may commend himself^t; as in his own defence, to maintain his authority, to urge his example, &c. so doth St Paul often. He calleth it folly to boast, (because generally such it is,) yet he doth it for those ends.

Let another praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips. Prov.
xxvii. 2.

IV. Thinking of ourselves.—Thinking of ourselves with glee and pleasure; this is a great nourisher of immoderate self-love; for the more they indulge to a gazing upon themselves with delight, the more they grow in love, the more passionately they come to dote on themselves.

It is good to reflect inward, and to view our

^t Vid. Plut. Περὶ τοῦ ἑαυτὸν ἐπαινεῖν ἀνεπιφθόνως.—[De Sui Laud. Opp. Tom. viii. p. 132 et seqq. Ed. Reisk.]

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LII.

souls; but we should do it so, as to find a wholesome displeasure and regret in beholding ourselves so foul and impure, so weak and defectuous, so ugly and deformed: if we do thus, we shall not overlove ourselves.

Some general remedies of self-love.

1 To reflect upon ourselves seriously and impartially, considering our natural nothingness, meanness, baseness, imperfection, infirmity, unworthiness; the meanness and imperfection of our nature, the defects and deformities of our souls, the failings and misdemeanours of our lives. He that doeth this cannot surely find himself lovely, and must therefore take it for very absurd to dote on himself. He will rather be induced to dislike, despise, abhor, and loathe himself.

2 To consider the loveliness of other beings superior to us, comparing them with ourselves, and observing how very far in excellency, worth, and beauty they transcend us; which if we do, we must appear no fit objects of love, we must be checked in our dotage, and diverted from this fond affection to ourselves. It cannot but dazzle our eyes and dull our affections to ourselves.

If we view the qualities and examples of other men, who in worth, in wisdom, in virtue, and piety, do far excel us; their noble endowments, their heroical achievements; what they have done and suffered in obedience to God, (their strict temperance and austerity, their laborious industry, their self-denial, their patience, &c.) how can we but in comparison despise and loathe ourselves?

If we consider the blessed angels and saints in glory and bliss; their purity, their humility, their

obedience; how can we think of ourselves without contempt and abhorrence? SERM.
LII.

Especially if we contemplate the perfection, the purity, the majesty of God; how must this infinitely debase us in our opinion concerning ourselves, and consequently diminish our fond affection toward things so vile and unworthy?

3 To study the acquisition and improvement of charity toward God and our neighbour. This will employ and transfer our affections; these drawing our souls outward, and settling them upon other objects, will abolish or abate the perverse love toward ourselves.

4 To consider, that we do owe all we are and have to the free bounty and grace of God: hence we shall see, that nothing of esteem or affection is due to ourselves; but all to him, who is the fountain and Author of all our good.

5 To direct our minds wholly toward those things which rational self-love requireth us to regard and seek: to concern ourselves in getting virtue, in performing our duty, in promoting our salvation, and arriving to happiness; this will divert us from vanity; a sober self-love will stifle the other fond self-love.

SERMON LIII.

PROVIDE THINGS HONEST IN THE SIGHT OF
ALL MEN.

ROM. XII. 17.

Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

SERM.
LIII.

Isai. iii. 9.

THE world apparently is come to that pass, that men commonly are afraid or ashamed of religious practice, hardly daring to own their Maker by a conscientious observance of his laws. While profaneness and wickedness are grown outrageously bold, so that *Many declare their sin as Sodom*; piety and virtue are become pitifully bashful, so that how few have the heart and the face openly to maintain a due regard to them! Men in nothing appear so reserved and shy as in avowing their conscience, in discovering a sense of their duty, in expressing any fear of God, any love of goodness, any concern for their own soul. It is wisdom, as they conceive, to compound with God, and to collude with the world; reserving for God some place in their heart, or yielding unto him some private acknowledgment; while in their public demeanour they conform to the world, in commission of sin, or neglect of their duty; supposing that God may be satisfied with the invisible part of his service, while men are gratified by visible compliance with their ungracious humours.

Such proceeding is built on divers very fallacious, absurd, and inconsistent grounds or pretences; whereby men egregiously do abuse themselves and would impose on others; namely these, and the like. SERM.
LIII.

They would not, by a fair show and semblance of piety, give cause to be taken for hypocrites; whereas, by dissembling their conscience, and seeming to have no fear of God before their eyes, they incur an hypocrisy no less criminal in nature, but far more dangerous in consequence, than is that which they pretend to decline. Ps. xxxvi.

They would not be apprehended vain-glorious for affecting to serve God in the view of men; whereas often at the bottom of their demeanour a most wretched and worse than pharisaical vain-glory doth lie; they forbearing the performance of their duty merely to shun the censure, or to gain the respect of the vilest and vainest persons.

They would be deemed exceedingly honest and sincere, because forsooth all their piety is cordial, pure, and void of sinister regards to popular esteem; whereas partial integrity is gross nonsense; whereas no pretence can be more vain, than that we hold a faithful friendship or hearty respect for God, whom we openly disclaim or disregard; whereas also it is easily discernible, that although their piety is not, yet their impiety is popular, and affected to ingratiate with men.

They would be taken for men of brave, courageous, and masculine spirits, exalted above the weaknesses of superstition and scrupulosity; whereas indeed, out of the basest cowardice, and a dread to offend sorry people, they have not a heart to act

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They would seem very modest in concealing their virtue; while yet they are most impudent in disclosing their want of conscience; while they are so presumptuous toward God, as to provoke him to his face by their disobedience; while they are not ashamed to wrong and scandalize their brethren by their ill behaviour.

Isai. lxxv. 3.
Jer. vi. 17;
viii. 12.

They would not be uncivil or discourteous in thwarting the mind and pleasure of their company; as if in the mean time they might be most rude toward God in affronting his will and authority; as if any rule of civility could oblige a man to forfeit his salvation; as if it were not rather most cruel discourtesy and barbarous inhumanity to countenance or encourage any man in courses tending to his ruin.

They would not be singular and uncouth, in distancing from the common road or fashion of men; as if it were better to leave the common duty than the common faults of men; as if wisdom and virtue were ever the most vulgar things; as if the way to heaven were the broadest and the most beaten way; as if rarity should abate the price of good things; as if conspiracy in rebellion against God might justify or excuse the fact; as if it were advisable to march to hell in a troop, or comfortable to lie there for ever among the damned crew of associates in wickedness.

They cannot endure to be accounted zealots or bigots in Religion; as if a man could love or fear God too much; or be over-faithful and careful in serving him; as if to be most earnest and solicitous

(not in promoting our own fancies, but) in discharging our plain duties could be justly reproachable, or were not, indeed, highly commendable.

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These things I may hereafter fully declare; in the mean time it is manifest, that such a practice is extremely prejudicial to Religion and goodness; so that it may be very useful to employ our meditations upon this text of the Apostle, which directly doth oppose and prohibit it.

The same text he elsewhere (in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians) doth repeat in the same terms, (only inserting a clause more fully explaining his sense,) backing his precept with his own example; for we, saith he there, did so manage the business of collecting and dispensing alms, as *To avoid that any man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us; providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but in the sight of men.* ^{2 Cor. viii. 20, 21.}

The words do imply a precept of very large extent, and touching a great part of our duty; even all thereof which is public and visible; for which we are accountable to the world, whereof man can take any cognisance; which concerneth all our speech and conversation, all our dealing and commerce, all our deportment relating to human society, civil or spiritual.

I shall first a little consider its meaning and design; then I shall propose reasons and inducements to its observance; then I shall declare the folly of those principles and pretences which obstruct that observance.

The meaning of it is, that we should have a special care of our external demeanour and conver-

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sation, which cometh under the view and observation of men; that it be exempted from any offence or blame^a; yea, that it be comely and commendable.

The terms in which it is expressed are notably emphatical; we are directed *προνοεῖν*, *to provide*, to use a providence and forecast in the case: ere we undertake any design, we should deliberate with ourselves, and consider on what theatre we shall act, what persons will be spectators, what conceits our practice may raise in them, and what influence probably it will have on them. We should not rush on into the public view with a precipitant rashness, or blind negligence, or contemptuous disregard, not caring who standeth in our way, who marketh what we do, what consequence our proceeding may have on the score of its being public and visible: we should advise beforehand, lay our business, and on set purpose order our behaviour with a regard to those to whose sight and notice we expose it, foreseeing how our actions may affect or incline them. So we must provide; what things? *καλὰ*, things fair and handsome; things not only good, innocent, and inoffensive to the sight of men; but goodly, pleasant, and acceptable to well-disposed beholders; such as our Apostle doth elsewhere recommend, Phil. iv. 8. when he chargeth us to regard, *ὅσα σεμνὰ*, *whatever things are venerable*, *ὅσα προσφιλῇ*, *whatever things are lovely*, *ὅσα εὖφημα*, *whatever things are of good report*, *εἰ τις ἔπαινος*, *whatever things are laudable*; and when he doth exhort us *to walk εὐσχημόνως*, *handsomely and decently*, in a comely garb and fashion of life: this may add an obligation to some things not directly prescribed by God, which yet

Rom. xiii.
13.
1 Thess. iv.
12.

^a Ἀμέμπτοι.—Phil. ii. 15. Ἀνέγκλητοι.—Col. i. 22.

may serve to adorn Religion, but it cannot detract any thing from what God hath commanded; it doth comprehend all instances of piety and virtue practicable before men; it certainly doth exclude all commission of sin, and omission of duty; for that nothing can be fair or handsome which is ugly in God's sight, which doth not suit to his holy will.

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Such things we must provide, *ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων*, before all men; not only before some men, to whom we bear a particular respect, of whom we stand in awe, upon whom we have a design; but universally before all men, as having a due consideration of all those upon whom our deportment may have influence; not despising or disregarding the observation of the meanest or most inconsiderable person whatever.

But in this practice, to avoid misapprehensions, we must distinguish; for it is not required, that we should do all things openly, nor intended that we should do any thing vainly; but that we should act constantly according to the nature and reason of things, with upright and pure intention: the Apostle doth not mean, that in our practice we should resemble the Pharisees, whom our Lord reproveth for doing their alms before men, for loving to pray standing in the synagogues, for doing all their works to be seen of men; performing those acts of piety openly in the corners of the street, which should have been done secretly in the closet; and so doing them out of vanity and ambitious design, to procure the good opinion and praise of men: he doth not intend, that we should assume a formal garb of singular virtue; that we should aim to seem better than we are, counterfeiting any point of

Matt. vi.
I, 5;
xxiii. 5.

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— even as good as we are, exposing all our piety to
 Matt. vi. 2. common view; that we should sound a trumpet before us, making an ostentation of any good deeds, catching at reputation or applause for them; that we should do any commendable thing chiefly to obtain the good opinion of the world, or to escape its censure: infinitely far it was from the Apostle's intention, that we should be like those *Whited sepulchres, which appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness*; that is, like those Pharisees, who did outwardly appear righteous, but within were full of hypocrisy and iniquity: No;

xxiii. 27,
28.

In some cases we must be reserved, and keep our virtue close to ourselves; and ever under a fair show there must be a real substance of good, together with an honest intention of heart^b; a good conscience must always lie at the bottom of a good conversation; the outside must be good, but the best side must be inward; we must endeavour to sanctify our life and conversation, but we must especially labour to purify our hearts and affections.

Join the precept with others duly limiting it, and it doth import, that with pure sincerity and unaffected simplicity (void of any sinister or sordid design) we should in all places, upon all occasions, in all matters, carefully discharge that part of our duty which is public, according to its nature, season, and exigency, that is, publicly; not abstaining from the practice of those good deeds, which cannot otherwise than openly be well performed; or the

^b Τὸ σεμνὸν ἀπλάστως. Τὸ εὐφημον, καὶ τοῦτο ἀψοφητί.—M. Ant. i. § 9. Vid. II. § 5.

conspicuous performance whereof is absolutely need-
ful in regard to God's law and the satisfaction of
our conscience, is plainly serviceable to the glory
of God, is very conducive to the edification of our
neighbour, or which may be useful to good pur-
poses concurrent with those principal ends: we
should as good trees from a deep root of true piety,
in due season naturally, as it were, shoot forth good
fruits, not only pleasant to the sight, but savoury
to the taste, and wholesome for use; as St Paul,
who, as he saith of himself, that he did provide
things honest in the sight of all men, so he also
doth affirm, that his *Rejoicing was this, the testi-
mony of his conscience, that in simplicity and godly
sincerity—he had his conversation in the world.*

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Matt. vii.

^{17.}
Luke vi.

^{44.}
Ps. i. 3.

² Cor. viii.
^{21.}

i. 12.

There are, indeed, some duties, or works of piety
and virtue, the nature whereof directeth, that in the
practice of them we should be reserved; such as
those wherein the world is not immediately con-
cerned, and which may with best advantage be
transacted between God and our own souls; as pri-
vate devotion, meditation on God's word and will,
the discussion of our consciences, voluntary exer-
cises of penitence, and the like: such also be those
wherein the intervention or notice of few persons
is required; as deeds of particular charity in dis-
pensing alms, good advice, friendly reproof; the
which sort of duties our Lord hath taught us to
perform *in secret*, ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ, or as closely as we
may; studiously keeping our observance of them
from the eyes of men; thereby assuring our sin-
cerity to ourselves, and guarding our practice from
any taint of vanity or suspicion of hypocrisy; as
also in some cases avoiding to cause prejudice or

Matt. vi.
4, 6.

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But there are divers other duties, the discharge whereof necessarily is notorious and visible; the public being the stage on which they are to be acted; the transaction of them demanding the intercourse of many persons, who are the objects or instruments of them, or are somewise concerned in them: such is that negative duty, of a general nature and vast comprehension, which we may call Ps. xxxiv. 14. innocence; that is, a total abstinence from sin, or forbearance to transgress any divine command; which is a part of Job's character, Job i. 1; ii. 3. *That man was perfect and upright, one that feared God, and eschewed evil*: the which duty, being to be practised at all times in every place, cannot avoid being observable.

Such are also divers positive duties; for such is the profession of our faith in God, and acknowledgment of his heavenly truth, revealed in the Gospel of our blessed Saviour; which is styled confessing our Lord before men, and is, as St Paul telleth us, Matt. x. 32. Rom. x. 10. indispensably requisite to salvation.

Such is joining in that public adoration, whereby the honour and authority of God are upheld in the world with seemly expressions of reverence; the which is to be performed solemnly, and, as the holy Ps. xcix. 5; Psalmist speaketh, *In the midst of the congregation.* cxxxii. 7; xxii. 22. Such is zeal in vindication of God's honour,

when occasion requireth, from blasphemous aspersions, or from scandalous offences against it.

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Such are justice, equity, fidelity, and ingenuity in our dealings; meekness, gentleness, patience, kindness, and courtesy in our converse; peaceableness in our carriage, and charitable beneficence; the objects whereof are most general, according to those apostolical precepts, that our moderation (or our equity and ingenuity) be known unto all men; that we shew all meekness to all men; that we must not strive, but be gentle unto all men; that we be patient toward all men; that we pursue peace with all men; that as we have opportunity, we should do good unto all men; should abound in love one towards another, and towards all men; should ever follow that which is good, both among ourselves and to all men; should liberally distribute to the saints and to all men; in performing which so general duties, how can a man pass *incognito*, how can he so deal with all men indiscernibly?

Phil. iv. 5.
Tit. iii. 2.
2 Tim. ii. 24.
1 Thess. v. 14.
Heb. xii. 14.
Rom. xii. 18.
Gal. vi. 10.
1 Thess. iii. 12; v. 15.
2 Cor. ix. 13.

Such are likewise gravity and modesty in our behaviour; sweetness, soberness, aptness to profit and edify the hearers in our discourse; moderation and temperance in our corporeal enjoyments; industry in our business and the works of our calling; integrity in the management of any office or trust committed to us; a constant practice of which virtues is not only enjoined to us as our particular duty, but for public example.

1 Tim. iv. 12.
Tit. ii. 4, 7.

Such are seasonable defence of the truth, and opposing of error; the commendation of virtue, and reprehension of notorious sin, with the like.

Such things must be practised, because indispensable duties; but they cannot be done out of

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Matt. v.
14.

sight, or barring the observation of men; they do involve publicness; they carry a light and lustre with them, attracting all eyes to regard them; it is as impossible to conceal them as to hide the sun from all the world, or to conceal a city that is set upon a hill; for *Nothing*, as St Chrysostom^c saith, *doth render a man so illustrious, although he ten thousand times would be hid, as an open practice of virtue.*

Wherefore, *The works of mercy*, saith St Austin^d, *the affection of charity, the sanctity of godliness, the incorruptness of chastity, the moderation of sobriety, these are perpetually to be held, whether we are in public or at home; whether before men or in the closet, whether we speak or keep silence.*

1 Cor. iv. 3.
1 Thess. ii.
4, 5.
Gal. ii. 10.

In the practice of them, it is true, we mainly should respect the approving our conscience to God^e, with expectation of our recompense from him; not being much concerned in the judgment or pleasure of men, purely considered in themselves; not aiming at any interest of credit or profit from them, as a reward of our work; *We ought*, as St Austin^f

^c Οὐδὲν γὰρ οὕτως ἐπίσημον ἄνθρωπον ποιεῖ, καὶ μυριάκις λανθάνειν βούληται, ὥς ἀρετῆς ἐπιδείξις.—Chrys. in Matt. v. 16. [Opp. Tom. II. p. 101.]

^d Opera misericordiæ, affectus caritatis, sanctitas pietatis, incorruptio castitatis, modestia sobrietatis, semper hæc tenenda sunt; sive cum in publico sumus, sive cum in domo; sive ante homines, sive in cubiculo; sive loquentes, sive tacentes, sive aliquid agentes, sive vacantes.—Aug. in 1 Joh. Tract. viii. [Opp. Tom. III. col. 877 E.]

^e Non cum fama sed cum rerum natura deliberandum est. — Sen Ep. LXXXI. [27]

^f Si times spectatores, non habebis imitatores; debes ergo videri. Sed non ad hoc debes facere, ut videaris. Non ibi debet esse finis gaudii tui, non ibi terminus lætitiæ tuæ, ut putes te totum fructum consecutum esse boni operis tui, cum visus fueris atque laudatus.—Ut supra. [col. 878 B.]

saith, while we do good, *to be seen, but we ought not to do it that we may be seen; the end of our joy, the bound of our comfort, should not be there; so that we should think ourselves to have obtained the whole fruit of a good work, when we have been seen and commended:* no, whatever we do, we should, as the Eph. vi. 6. Apostle directeth, *do it, As the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; Doing it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord we shall receive the reward of the inheritance.* Col. iii. 23, 24.

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Yet nothing in the mean-time should hinder us from performing such necessary duties; strictly and exactly, with our most diligent care and endeavour, even in that light which their nature doth carry in it.

How much soever of our virtue or piety out of humility or modesty we may conceal, yet we must be careful of discovering any vice or irreligion, either by notoriously committing any thing forbidden by God, or omitting any thing commanded by him.

This we should not do upon any terms, upon any pretence whatever; no wicked fashion should engage us, no bad example should inveigle us, no favour of men should allure us, no terror should scare us thereto; we should not out of fear, out of shame, out of complaisance, out of affected prudence or politic design; out of deference to the quality, dignity, or authority of any person; out of regard to any man's desire or pleasure; we should not, to decline offence, envy, blame, reproach, ill treatment, or upon any such account, comply in any sinful practice, wave any duty, neglect any season of performing a good deed, whereby we may

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glorify God, or edify our neighbour, or promote the welfare of our own soul.

To such a practice, according to the intent of St Paul's injunction, we are obliged; and thereto we may be induced by divers considerations, particularly by those which we shall now propose.

I We may consider, that the public is the proper, natural, and due place of goodness; it should dwell in the light, it should walk freely and boldly everywhere, it should expose itself to open view^g, that it may receive from rational creatures its due approbation, respect, and praise; it by publicness is advanced, and the more it doth appear, the more beautiful, the more pleasant, the more useful it is; yielding the fairer lustre, the greater influence, the better effects; thereby diffusing and propagating itself, becoming exemplary, instructive, and admonitive; drawing lovers and admirers to it; exciting and encouraging men to embrace it: wherefore it is very absurd that it should sculk or sneak; it is a great damage to the public that it should retire from common notice.

Job xxiv.
13—17.

On the other hand, it is proper for wickedness never to appear or to shew its head in view; it should be confined to darkness and solitude, under guard of its natural keepers, shame and fear^h; it should be exterminated from all conversation among rational creatures, and banished to the infernal shades: publicness doth augment and aggravate it; the more it is seen, the more ugly, the more loath-

^g Bona conscientia prodire vult et conspici; ipsas nequitia tenebras timet.—Sen. [Ep. xcvi. 11.]

^h Omne malum aut timore, aut pudore natura perfudit.—Tertul. Apol. cap. i. [Opp. p. 2 c.]

some, the more noxious it is; its odious shape being disclosed, its noisome steams being dispersed, its pestilent effects being conveyed thereby.

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Wherefore to smother virtue (that fair child of light) in privacy, and to vent sin (*The works of darkness*) openly, is quite to transplace things out of their natural situation and order; according to which we are taught by our Lord, that, *He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be manifest*; and that, *Every one who doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh he to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd*: so indeed it is, and will be, where conscience retaineth its due sway and force; where a due respect and reverence are preserved for goodness.

Rom. xiii.
12.
Eph. v. 11.

John iii. 21;

ver. 20.
Eph. v. 13.

As that any good cometh from detection of sin is an accidental advantage; so that any mischief doth ever follow the manifestation of virtue is an unnatural abuse; the which may well be prevented: there can be no danger of acting any good most evidently, if we do withal act sincerely, having purified our hearts from dishonest intention and from ambitious vanity; the fear of which should not wholly drive virtue under the hatches, and bring vice upon the stage. But,

2 We should consider, that we cannot really in any competent or tolerable measure be good men, without approving ourselves such in our conversation before men.

Whatever may be pretended, it commonly doth happen, and it ever is to be suspected, that the invisible piety which is not accompanied with visible conscientiousness is false, or is no piety at all; or that they who have little care and conscience to

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serve God publicly have much less to serve him privately; or that such as betray a scandalous negligence of their ways will hardly maintain a careful watch over their hearts; for the same causes (be it profane infidelity, or looseness of principles, or supine incogitancy, or sloth, or stupidity) which dispose them to disregard God and his laws before the world, more effectually will incline them to neglect God and forget their duty by themselves, where beside their own conscience there is no witness, no judge, no censor to encourage or reproach them. But admit it possible, and put case, that sometimes the heart and conversation may not run parallel; that a man may better govern his interior thoughts and affections, than he doth manage his exterior behaviour and actions; that a man secretly may cleave to God, although he seemeth openly to desert him; yet this will not suffice to constitute or denominate a man good; because much of goodness, as we have shewed, even the nobler half thereof, (that part whereby God is most glorified, and whereby the world is most benefited,) doth lie in open and visible practice: that virtue therefore must be very imperfect, that obedience must be very lame, which is deficient in so great a part.

James ii.
10.

As there can be no fair pretence to goodness, where so little thereof is conspicuous; so there can be no real integrity thereof, where so much of duty is wanting.

Luke vi. 44.

James ii.
18.

Our Lord hath taught us, that, *Every tree is known by its fruit*; and St James saith, that, *Faith is shewed by works*; and so it is, that a man can hardly be good in any reasonable degree without

appearing such. Impiety may, but piety cannot be quite concealed. As gold may be counterfeited, (for all is not gold that glistereth,) yet true gold always doth look like gold; so although bad men sometimes may seem good, yet good men also must seem such, appearing in their own native temper and lustre.

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Goodness cannot be disguised in the shape of evil, because simplicity and innocence are essential ingredients of it: any mixture of notorious sin, any visible neglect of duty assuring (yea formally making) a want of it, or a real defect therein: it may be daubed with false aspersions, it may be dimmed by the breath of unjust and uncharitable censures; but, wiping them off, its natural hue certainly will appear.

Wherefore, if we would satisfy ourselves in our own consciences, or justify ourselves to others, that we are truly good, we must (without partiality, or distinguishing between public and private) like the holy Psalmist, have respect unto all God's commandments; we, like Zachary and Elizabeth, must walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless; we must like David, accomplish all God's wills¹; we must observe St Paul's rule, *To abstain ἀπὸ παντὸς εἵδους πονηροῦ*, from both every kind of evil, and every bad appearance. But further,

Ps. cxix. 6.
Luke i. 6.

Acts xiii.
22.

1 Thess. v.
22.

3 A great care of our good behaviour before men is necessary in regard to Almighty God; whose just interest is preserved, whose due homage is paid, whose honour is promoted thereby; the

¹ Ποιεῖν πάντα τὰ θελήματά μου.—Acts xiii. 22.

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same being greatly prejudiced and impaired by the contrary defailance.

It is a clear point of justice toward God, as to render all obedience to him, so particularly that which consisteth in an open acknowledgment and service of him; for as he made and doth preserve not only the heart, but the tongue, the members, Rom. xii. 1. the whole man, so all must concur in rendering their tribute of reverence and service to him.

1 Cor. x. 31.

The Apostle doth prescribe, that, *Whatever we do, we should do all to the glory of God*; and well he might, seeing that to glorify God is, indeed, to execute the main design of our creation, to apply our faculties to their best use, to achieve the most proper and most excellent work whereof we are capable; to do that which is the worthiest and happiest employment of angels, which all the company of heaven, with most ardent desire, with most zealous ambition, with restless endeavour, doth pursue; and this we cannot better, we cannot otherwise do, than by an apparent good conversation. For

He that apparently in all his actions maketh conscience of obeying God's laws, thereby doth evidence his firm persuasion concerning the existence and providence of God; doth adhere to him against all adversaries of piety, and all temptations to rebellion; doth avow his sovereign majesty and authority; doth yield him due veneration and obedience; doth shew right apprehensions of him, and just affections towards him; implying that he doth most highly esteem him, doth most heartily love him, doth chiefly dread him, doth repose his trust and hope in him for all his happiness; hath a great

opinion of his wisdom, a great awe of his power, a great sense of his goodness; the which practice is in itself a direct and formal glorification of God, in his own person.

He also thereby doth further promote the glory of God, instructing, exciting, and encouraging others to the like practice of deferring respect and service to God; for naturally men have such a capacity, such aptitude, such proclivity to Religion, (or to the acknowledgment and worship of their Maker,) that when they behold others seriously and earnestly pursuing it, they are easily drawn to conspire therein; especially those who are not utterly perverted and corrupted by ill custom.

And whereas good conversation hath a native beauty, affecting beholders with delight^k; whereas the fruits of virtue have a pleasing sweetness, grateful to all who taste them; men from that sight and that sense will presently be moved to commend the wisdom, and to bless the goodness of him who was pleased to institute so excellent a Religion, to enact so beneficial laws, to prescribe so wholesome duties to us: for, *When*, saith the most divine Father^l, *an infidel shall see thee, a believer, to be*

^k Ἀρετῆς ἀσκησις τίμιον μὲν κτῆμα τῷ ἔχοντι· ἡδιστον δὲ θεαμάτων τοῖς ἐπιτυχάνουσιν.—Bas. [Ep. cclxxviii. Opp. Tom. iii. p. 422.]

^l [Ὅταν γὰρ ὁ ἄπιστος ἴδῃ σε τὸν πιστὸν κατεσταλμένον, σωφρον-
οῦντα, κόσμιον ὄντα, ἐκπλαγῆσεται καὶ ἐρεῖ· ἀληθῶς μέγας ὁ τῶν Χρι-
στιανῶν Θεός. οἷους κατέστησεν ἀνθρώπους; οἷους ἐξ οἷων ἐποίησεν;
ἀγγέλους αὐτοὺς ἐξ ἀνθρώπων εἰργάσατο; ἂν ὑβρίσῃ τις, οὐ λοιδοροῦνται·
ἂν τυπτήσῃ τις, οὐκ ἀγανακτοῦσιν· ἂν ἀδικήσῃ τις, ὑπερεύχονται τοῦ
λελυπηκότος· ἐχθρὸν οὐκ ἔχουσι, μνησικακεῖν οὐκ ἐπίστανται, φλυαρεῖν
οὐκ ἴσασιν, οὐκ ἔμαθον ψεύδεσθαι, ἐπιорκεῖν οὐκ ἀνέχονται, μᾶλλον δὲ
οὐδὲ ὀμνύειν· ἀλλὰ τὴν γλῶτταν ἐκτμηθῆναι ἂν ἔλοιντο πρότερον, ἢ
ὄρκον τινὰ ἀπὸ τοῦ στόματος προέσθαι.]—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. θ'. [Opp. Tom.
vi. p. 524.]

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κατεσταλμένον—*stanch, sober, orderly, he will be astond, and will say, In truth, great is the God of Christians: What men hath he made! what persons out of what persons hath he made them! how from men hath he made them angels! If one abuse them, they do not rail; if one smite them, they do not resent; if one injure them, they pray for him that doeth the offence; they know not to remember ill turns, they skill not to be vain, they have not learnt to lie, they cannot abide to forswear, or rather to swear at all, but sooner would choose to have their tongue cut out, than to let an oath slip out of their mouth.*

So may we really glorify God; and otherwise than by open practice we cannot do it; for glory doth require a public stage; it implying, as Seneca^m saith, the consent of many worthy persons declaring their esteem; it being, as Ciceroⁿ defineth it, *The agreeing praise of good men, with an incorrupted vote judging well of an excellent virtue.*

Wherefore toward our being enabled to glorify God, two things must concur; that we be good men, and that we be openly such.

That we be good men, because otherwise our commendation will have no worth or weight; for, *Praise is not comely in the mouth of sinners^o.* It is no ornament to be commended by ill men, to

^m Gloria consensum multorum exigit.—Sen. Ep. cii. [12.]

Consentire in hoc plures insignes et præstantes viri debent, ut claritas sit.—Id. ibid. § 8.

ⁿ Gloria est consentiens laus bonorum, incorrupta vox bene judicantium de eccellente virtute.—Cic. Tusc. Dis. iii. [2. 3.]

Gloria est frequens de aliquo fama cum laude.—Id. de Inv. ii. [55.]

^o Non est speciosa laus in ore peccatoris.—Ecclus. xv. 9.

whose words little regard is due, little trust can be given. SERM.
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That we be good openly, avowing God in practice conducing to his honour; otherwise no glory can accrue to him from our goodness: we may serve God, and please him in private; but we cannot by that service glorify him; at least at present, and here in this world. It is true, the closest piety will yield glory to God at the last, when our *Lord* ^{2 Thess. i.} *shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired* ^{10.} *in them that believe;* but to design such a future glorification of God is not enough; it is our duty to glorify God now, that we may be rewarded for it, and that he may requite us with glory hereafter.

God himself telleth us in the Psalm, *Whoso* ^{Ps. l. 23;} *offereth praise, he glorifieth me;* and how can praise be offered, or to what purpose will it be offered, otherwise than apparently, either in word or deed, by oral or by real expression, to the ears or to the eyes of men, so as to occasion in them the production of worthy conceptions and due affections toward God? In such a manner the holy man did offer it, who said, *I will declare thy name unto* ^{xxii. 22;} *my brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will* ^{cxl. 1;} *praise thee; I will praise the Lord with my whole* ^{cvii. 32;} *heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the* ^{cix. 30.} *congregation:* he did it sometimes with his mouth, which is a notable part of our conversation; but we may do it continually by our life; for, *He*, saith St Austin^p, *who praiseth God with his tongue,*

^p Qui Deum laudat lingua, non semper potest; qui moribus Deum laudat, semper potest.—Aug. in 1 Ep. Joh. Tr. viii. [Opp. Tom. iii. col. 877 E.]

SERM. LIII. cannot do that always; but he that praiseth God by his manners can always do it.

This motive is by the great masters of our Christian practice frequently urged; for

Phil. i. 11. St Paul wisheth the Philippians, *To be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God*; he prayeth

2 Thess. i. 11, 12. for the Thessalonians, that, *God would fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ might be glorified in them*; he particularly doth

2 Cor. ix. 11—13. incite the Corinthians to works of charity, that by that ministration men might be induced to glorify God, rendering him thankful praise for their beneficial obedience.

1 Pet. ii. 12. St Peter likewise doth exhort all Christians, *To have their conversation honest among the Gentiles, that they might by their good works, which they should behold, glorify God in the day of visitation, ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπισκοπῆς*, (that is, perhaps, when they carefully do view and reflect on them.)

Our Lord himself thus chargeth his disciples, Matt. v. 16. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven*; they did observe his command, and the effect did follow, many being converted to God, no less by the radiant integrity of their life, than by the persuasive efficacy of their doctrine^a: and,

John xv. 8. *In this, saith our Lord again, is my Father glorified, if ye bear much fruit*: what fruit was that? what but of good works, visible to the eye and perceptible to the taste; otherwise how could men thence find cause to glorify God?

^a Vid. Chrys. in Matt. Hom. xv. [Opp. Tom. II. p. 100.]

In fine, this is declared to be the peculiar design of our Religion, or of the whole Christian institution; to this end we are made *A chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that we should shew forth the praises (or virtues) of him, who hath called us out of darkness to his marvellous light*; not only by our profession, but in our practice declaring his goodness.

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1 Pet. ii. 9.

On the other hand, by stifling our virtue and conscience, in an open compliance with sin, or neglect of our duty, we greatly shall dishonour God; for thereby in effect we deny him and desert him; we injure his majesty, and disclaim our allegiance to him; we intimate our mean opinion of him, and small affection to him; we betray our want of reverence to his excellency, of dread to his greatness, of love to his goodness, of hope in his promises and gracious overtures of mercy, of fear in regard to his severe justice and fierce menaces; so immediately we dishonour him, and we thereby also do countenance disrespect and disobedience to him; and our behaviour tendeth to produce or to confirm the like irreligious dispositions of mind and impious practices in others; so that with horrible disingenuity we cross the design of our creation, and violate our greatest obligations toward our Maker.

Indeed, what greater affront or more heinous indignity can we offer to God, than openly before the world, by the most real expression of our own works, to deny and disown him: than to be notoriously ashamed or afraid to avow him for our Lord and Master; than to express no sense of our duty to him, no reverence of his authority, no

Tit. i. 16.

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gratitude for his benefits to us; than visibly to prefer any other consideration or worldly advantage before a regard to his will and pleasure?

In this, open sin doth outgo private wickedness, and putteth down even the worst hypocrisy, (beside its own,) that it not only offendeth God, but sorely woundeth his honour, and exposeth his glorious name to contempt; by which consideration such miscarriages are frequently aggravated in Holy Scripture; so in the Prophets God complaineth of his people, for having by their scandalous crimes profaned his holy name among the heathen; so St Paul expostulateth with the Jew, *Thou that boastest of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?* so Nathan told David, that God would punish him, because by his bad deed he had given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. But,

Ezek.
xxxvi. 20.

Rom. ii. 23.

2 Sam. xii.
14.

4 We should be careful of our good behaviour in the sight of men, that we may thereby maintain the dignity and repute of our Christian profession, which by our naughty or negligent demeanour will be much disparaged and disgraced.

Most evident it is to reason, that a visible practice, conformable to the rules of our Religion, cannot otherwise than exceedingly commend and grace it; for how can the goodness of a rule more surely obtain its due commendation, than from its being applied to observable practice and experience?

Assuredly charity, meekness, humility, patience, sobriety, discretion, and all Christian virtues, as in themselves they are very amiable and venerable to all men, as they yield great benefit and much plea-

sure to those whom their consequences do touch; so they do ingratiate the law which prescribeth them, they bring esteem to the principles whence they are derived; *He*, as the Apostle saith, *that in these things serveth Christ, is both acceptable to God, and approved of men*, as the follower of a most excellent rule.

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Rom. xiv.
18.

We may also consider, that a conspicuous practice, according to our Religion, is a demonstrative proof, that we do seriously and firmly embrace it, or that we are heartily and steadily persuaded of its truth; which is no small credit to any profession; arguing that it hath a good foundation in reason, apt to bottom and sustain a solid faith.

And as thereby we pregnantly do evidence, that we ourselves do highly value the noble privileges, the excellent promises, the precious rewards exhibited in the Gospel; so we thereby do breed a like esteem in others; upon whom the authority of men apparently virtuous and conscientious infallibly will have a forcible influence.

Such a practice will have a great stroke toward evincing the truth and reality, the perfect excellency, the notable strength and efficacy of our Religion; plainly shewing, that it is not a mere name, an idle pretence, a weak fancy, a dry speculation, a chimerical dream; but a vigorous and masculine principle, able to produce most worthy fruits of substantial goodness, profitable to men; conducive to our own welfare, and to the benefit of others.

As gallant actions, becoming a noble rank, elevated above the vulgar level, do illustrate and dignify nobility itself; so doth a worthy conversation, beseeeming our high station in the heavenly

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kingdom, our near alliances to God, those splendid titles and glorious privileges assigned to every faithful Christian in the evangelical charter, render our state admirable, and make it seem an excellent advantage to be a Christian.

Hence in the apostolical writings an observance of the evangelical laws is so much and often enforced by this consideration; for upon this account we are exhorted to a careful discharge of our duty, that, *We may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*; we are urged, *To have our conversation worthy of the Gospel; To walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called*, to behave ourselves, *As worthily becometh saints*, (that is, persons instituted in so holy a Religion, and designed to so peculiar excellency in virtue; *To walk as children of the light*, (that is, of truth and knowledge revealed from heaven;) *To walk worthy of God, who hath called us unto his kingdom and glory; Worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing, being fruitful in every good work*; the which enforcements of duty do imply a visible practice, producing the visible effects of ornament and credit to our Religion, recommending it to the minds and consciences of men.

Contrariwise, the defect of good conversation before men in Christians is upon divers accounts disgraceful to our Religion. For

It tempteth men to judge, that we ourselves do not heartily believe its truth or value its worth; that we do not approve its doctrine for reasonable, or take its advantages for considerable; or deem the name and state of a Christian to be honourable; seeing we are not concerned to own them, or do not

care to engage our reputation in avowing and abetting them in that way which doth best signify our mind and meaning^r: for men certainly will judge of our sense not so much by what we say as from what we do; not by our verbal profession or pretence, but from our practice, as the surest indication of our heart.

Wherefore, when they hear us to confess our faith, and see us act like infidels, they will be forced to esteem us either for subdolous hypocrites or for inconsistent fools; who assume the name of Christians, and pretend to great advantages thence, yet in effect do not mind or regard them; highly commending the rules of our Religion, but not at all observing them; greatly admiring the example of our Saviour, but not caring to imitate it; describing heaven for a most happy place, but not striving to get thither in the sole way which our Lord prescribeth, of faithful and diligent obedience to his precepts.

Seeing, I say, this repugnance between our profession and our practice will induce men to charge us with hypocrisy or folly; and if the professors be taken for counterfeits or fools, the profession itself will hardly scape from being held imposture or folly.

Our Religion at least will thence be exposed to the censures of being no better than a fond device, and a barren notion, unpracticable, ineffectual, and insignificant to any good purpose.

The visible misbehaviour, I say, of Christians will assuredly derive obloquy and reproach on

^r Εἰ δέ τις ἐλεγχθῇ πράξας τι ἄνομον, ὁ τοιοῦτος οὐ μόνον ἑαυτὸν ἔβλαψεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ βλασφημίαν προσέτριψε τῷ κοινῷ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας σώματι. — Const. Ap. II. 8. [Cotel. Pat. Apost. Tom. I. p. 218.]

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Christianity, if not as bad, yet as vain, impotent, impertinent, and useless; especially those who are disaffected to it will hence take advantage to insult upon it with contemptuous scorn; To what, will they say, do your fine rules serve? what effects do your glorious hopes produce? where are the fruits of that holy faith and heavenly doctrine which you so extol and magnify?

Whereas also bad conversation commonly doth not only deprive men of the benefits which our Religion promiseth, but doth carry with it hurtful fruits; men that see or feel them will be apt to impute them to Religion.

If a Christian be unjust, censorious, factious, anywise offensive or troublesome, although irreligion be the cause of such things, yet Religion must bear the blame, and they presently exclaim,

Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum^s.

Whence St Paul (who as a powerful instructor doth impress matters of duty by the most proper motives) doth often and upon all occasions urge
 2 Cor. vi. 3. this consideration; he chargeth us, *To give no offence in any thing, that the ministry* (or evangelical dispensation) *be not blamed*, ἵνα μὴ μωμηθῇ ἡ διακονία, or exposed to the censure of any captious Momus; he biddeth us to forbear harsh judgment and all uncharitable dealing, that *Our good be not evil spoken of*;
 Rom. xiv. 16. he presseth the discharge of our duty in each calling and relation, that by neglect thereof the
 1 Tim. vi. 1. Gospel be not defamed: *Let*, saith he, *as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his*

^s [Lucret. I. 102.]

doctrine be not blasphemed; and, Let women be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed; and, I will that younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, (so as) to give no occasion to the adversary (that is, to persons disaffected to Christianity) to speak reproachfully (of it): which discourse, by clear parity of reason, may be applied to any other state or relation.

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Tit. ii. 5.

1 Tim. v. 14.

Now seriously, what greater mischief can we do, what heavier guilt may we contract, than by working dishonour to God's adorable name, than by casting reproach on God's heavenly truth, than by drawing a scandal on that holy Religion, which the Son of God came down from heaven to establish, for the glory of God and salvation of mankind? Surely next after directly blaspheming God, and defying Religion with our own mouths, the next crime is to make others to do so, or in effect to do it by their profane tongues.

Rom. ii. 24.

There remain divers arguments of very great moment, which the time will not suffer me to urge; and therefore I must reserve them to another occasion.

SERMON LIV.

PROVIDE THINGS HONEST IN THE SIGHT OF
ALL MEN.

ROM. XII. 17.

Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

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I HAVE formerly discoursed upon this apostolical precept; and having declared the meaning of it, (briefly importing that we should have a special care of our external behaviour, coming under the view and observation of men, that it be perfectly innocent and inculpable,) I did propose divers motives inducing to the observance of it; but divers others of great importance the time would not allow me to urge; I shall therefore now proceed to offer them to your consideration.

I did then shew that a regard to the reason and nature of things, to the satisfaction of our conscience, to the honour of God, and to the credit of our Religion, did require from us a good conversation before men; I now further add, that,

1 The real interest of piety and virtue do exact such a conversation, as the most effectual way of upholding, advancing, and propagating them among men.

Example is a very powerful thing either way, both for attraction to good and seduction to evil; such is the nature of men, that they are more apt

to be guided by the practice of others than by their own reason, and more easily can write after a copy than by a rule; that they are prone to imitate whatever they see done, be it good or bad, convenient or inconvenient, profitable or hurtful, emulating the one, and aping the other; that they love to be in the fashion, and will go anywhither in company, presuming of support, defence, and comfort therein; that they will satisfy their minds and justify their doings by any authority, deeming that laudable or allowable, or at least tolerable and excusable, for which they can allege precedents; judging, that if they are not singular, they are innocent, or however not very culpable; that hardly they will undertake any thing without countenance, whereby their modesty is in some measure secured, and partners engaged to bear a share with them in the censure to which their deportment is liable. Hence a visible good conversation will have a great efficacy toward the promotion and propagation of goodness; the authority of that being adjoined to the native worth and beauty, to the rational plausibility, to the sensible benefit of virtue, will cogently draw men to it; it will be a clear pattern, whereby they shall be informed what they are obliged and what they are able to perform; it will be a notable spur, smartly exciting them to mind and pursue their duty; it will be a vigorous incentive, inflaming their courage, and provoking an emulation to do well.

The visible succour and countenance of many, espousing the cause of goodness by their practice, will assuredly bring it into request and vogue, and thence into current use and fashion; so just a cause cannot fail to prosper, having any reasonable forces

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to maintain it; it will have great strength, great boldness and assurance, when a considerable party doth appear engaged on its side.

Phil. ii. 14,
15.

Yea, sometimes even the example of a few will do it great service; the rarity giving a special lustre to their virtue, and rendering it more notable; according to that intimation of the Apostle, when he thus doth exhort the Philippians to a cheerful and forward practice of goodness; *Do all things, saith he, without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.*

A good conversation doth notify good men to one another, and draweth them together, and combineth them in a party, for the protection of goodness, heartening and aiding one another therein.

Such advantages goodness doth always need; for it ever hath in the world many adversaries, striving by violent force to beat it down, or by treacherous fraud to supplant it; who use their authority and interest to suppress it; who by their evil example do seduce from it; who labour by detraction to blast it, by scorn and reproach to discourage it, by divers temptations and baits to entice from it; who combining their forces with the wicked spirits, and with the corrupt inclinations of men, do raise a mighty party for wickedness.

Wherefore, to balance such oppositions, goodness doth need friends to maintain it; not only friends in heart, or secret well-wishers; but open friends, who frankly will avow it, and both in word and deed will stoutly abet it.

A demure, bashful, timorous friendship, will rather prejudice than help it; for nothing will more animate its foes to assail and persecute it, than observing its friends to slink and sneak: when good men hide their faces, as if they were ashamed of their goodness, then bad men will grow more impudent and insolent in their outrages against it.

Wherefore, if we would have goodness hold up its head, we must openly take its part; if we would not be guilty of its ruin, we must stand up to uphold it; for whoever openly complieth with sin, or neglecteth his duty, may well be charged with its ruin; since if thou so desertest goodness, another after thy pattern may do the like, and a third may follow him; so the neglect of it may soon be propagated, until at length it may be quite abandoned, and left destitute of support: if it doth not thus happen, it will as to thee be accidental, and no thanks to thee for its better fortune.

The declension of piety is not perhaps more to be ascribed to any other cause than to this, that men who approve goodness in their hearts are so backward to shew it in their practice; that good men do so affect retirement and wrapping up their virtue in obscurity; that most men think it enough, if in the cause of Religion against profaneness and dissoluteness they appear neuters, and do not impugn it: for if in a time of infection all sound men do shut up themselves, and all sick men walk abroad, how necessarily must the plague reign in the place?

2 Charity toward our neighbour demandeth from us a great care of our conversation before men.

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The law of charity, which is the great law of Christianity, doth oblige us earnestly to further our neighbour's good of all kinds, especially that which is incomparably his best good, the welfare of his soul; which how can we better do, than by attracting him to the performance of his duty to God, and by withdrawing him from the commission of sin? And how can we do that without an apparently good conversation, or without plainly declaring, as occasion sheweth, for virtue, both in word and deed? how can a shy reservedness conduce to that end? what will invisible thoughts or affections of heart confer thereto?

Rom. xiv.

^{19.}
1 Cor. xiv.
^{26.}

It is a precept of charity, that we should pursue things wherewith one may edify another: and how can we perform that duty, without imparting our mind, and, as it were, transfusing it into others; so as by converting them from error and sin, by instilling good principles, by exciting good resolutions, to lay in them a foundation of goodness, or by cherishing and improving the same to rear a structure of virtue in them? how can we mutually edify without mutually advising virtue, exhorting to it, recommending and impressing it by our exemplary behaviour?

The Apostles do enjoin, that, *We should exhort one another, and edify one another*; that, *We should consider one another, to provoke* (or to whet and instigate one another) *to love and to good works*; the which can nowise be performed, without expressly declaring for goodness and remarkable actings in its behalf: to commend and press it by word is a part of our duty; but not all of it, nor sufficient to this purpose; especially seeing we can-

1 Thess. v.

^{11.}

Heb. x. 24.

not urge that with good confidence, nor shall be held serious in pleading for it, which we do not ourselves embrace in practice; for how can we expect, that our reason should convince others, when it doth not appear really to have persuaded ourselves, when our doings evidently do argue the weakness of our discourse?

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Words hardly will ever move without practice, although practice sometimes will persuade without words; according to that of St Peter, *Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives, while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear, (or due reverence to them.)*

1 Pet. iii.
1, 2.

Again; We are frequently commanded to shun the giving any offence, or the putting a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in the way of our brother; that is, to do any thing which anywise may confer to his incurring any sin: the which precepts are violated not only by positive and active influence, by proposing erroneous doctrine, evil advice, fraudulent enticements to sin, or discouragements from duty; but also by withholding the means serving to prevent his transgression; such as a tacit indulgence or connivance, when good admonition may reclaim him; the omission of good example when it is seasonable, and probably may prove efficacious: for these neglects have a moral causality, inducing or encouraging the commission of sin; our silence, our forbearing to act, our declining fair opportunities to guide him into the right way will be taken for signs of approbation and consent; and consequently as arguments to justify or to

1 Cor. x.
32;
viii. 9.
2 Cor. vi. 3.
Rom. xiv.
13.

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excuse bad practice, in proportion to the authority and esteem we have; which ever will be some in this case, when they favour the infirmity of men.

Charity doth further oblige us, upon just cause, and in due season, to check and reprove our neighbour misdemeaning himself; for, *Warn the disorderly*, saith the Apostle; and, *Have no fellowship*, saith he, *with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them*; and, *Thou shalt not*, saith the Law, *hate thy brother in thy heart, thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him*: where forbearance of reproof is implied to shew not only a defect of charity, but hatred of our brother; and a good reason is intimated for it, because in so doing we suffer sin to lie upon him; not hindering his progress in it, not endeavouring his conversion from it: but reproof is an overt act; involving somewhat of openness and plain freedom, such as the Wise Man doth prefer before close good-will; for, *Open rebuke*, saith he, *is better than secret love*.

Prov.
xxvii. 5.

Gen. iv. 9.

We are all thus far the keepers of our brethren, and it is a charge incumbent on us, by all good means to preserve them from the worst of mischiefs.

In fine, there is plainly nothing more inconsistent with true charity, than such a compliance with sin or neglect of duty in the sight of our neighbour, which is scandalous, or may prove contagious to him; for how can we love him, whose chief good, whose eternal welfare we do not tender? whom we do not fear to seduce into the way of extreme misery, or do not at least care to lead into

the way of happiness? whom without any check we can suffer to forfeit the best goods, and to incur the saddest calamities? SERM.
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Wherefore, if the love of ourselves and a sober regard to our own welfare be not sufficient to induce us, yet a charitable disposition and a concernedness for our neighbour (for our brethren, our relations, our friends) should move us to a good, innocent, virtuous, fruitful, and exemplary conversation: if we do not care to save ourselves, yet let it Rom. xiv.
15. pity us to damn and destroy others by our negligence.

3 But if charity will not move us, yet justice, exacting from us a care of our good conversation before men, should constrain us thereto.

Exemplary and edifying conversation is a debt which we owe to the world, a good office imposed on us by the laws of common humanity.

When without our own hurt or inconvenience we can do considerable good to our neighbour, he hath a title thereto, (granted by the common Author of our nature, the absolute Lord of all we are or have,) and he may justly demand it from us; as we in like case might claim it from him, and certainly would in matters agreeable to our humour expect it: wherefore seeing good conversation not only doth not harm or incommode us, but is most beneficial to ourselves, and it exceedingly may benefit our neighbour, it is most just that we should afford it to him: it is no more than fair dealing to do it; to neglect it is a real injury to him.

To set ill example before our neighbour, or (which is in part and in effect the same) to withhold

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good example from him, (for not to give a good example is a bad thing, and so a bad example; this,) I say, is plainly a great iniquity, and a wrong to him. For,

Is it not an injury to offer a cup of poison to any man, to invite him to drink it, to be his taster of it, so drawing him to take it off without suspicion or fear of deadly mischief? is it not an injury to forbear warning him thereof, or not to deter him from it, when it standeth before him, and he is ready to put it to his mouth? would not such a man in all conscionable esteem pass for a murderer of his neighbour?

Is it not a great wrong to carry any man out of his way (out of a right, easy, fair, and safe road) into mazes, thickets, and sloughs, or into intricate, foul, dangerous by-ways? Is it not wrongful, when he doth wander or err, not to reduce him thence, not to set him in the right way?

Is it not very foul dealing to bring a man to a steep precipice, and thence to leap down before him? is it not so, not to stop him, when he is on the brink, and blindly moving forward to cast himself down headlong?

If these be injurious dealings, then palpably it is far more such to yield any enticements or encouragements, yea not to put obstructions, if we are able, to our neighbour's incurring sin, which to his soul is all those things; the most baneful venom, the most woful exorbitancy, the most pernicious gulf that can be.

Prov. viii.
36.

We by sinning do not only, as the Wise Man saith, wrong our own souls, but we do also wrong the souls of others; drawing them or driving them,

by the efficacious impulse of our example^a, into mischief and misery; for, *When, saith St Paul, ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ*^b; he there speaketh of bad example; the which he not only affirmeth to be sinful in regard of Christ, but calleth it sinning against our brethren; and supposeth that we thereby do wound or smite their conscience; which to do is surely no less wrong to them, than if we should assault, beat, and wound their bodies; the wounds of conscience being of all most grievous, and producing most insupportable affliction; according to that of the Wise Man, *The spirit of a man will bear his infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can bear?*

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1 Cor. viii.
12.

Prov.
xviii. 14.

Indeed, by thus hurting our neighbour, we do him a wrong, not only very great in itself, but such as may probably be irreparable, for which hardly we can ever be able to make him any restitution or compensation; for a better example scarce will reach all whom a bad example hath touched; the best example hardly will avail to undo that which a bad example hath done; if thereby we have engaged our neighbour in sin, we by no means can restore his lost innocence, or prevent his saying, *Woe be to me, for I have sinned*: it will be very difficult to recover him into that state (that sound condition of soul) from which we did move him; it will however cost him, if not a final ruin, yet a sore repentance; the pangs whereof no compensation

Lam. v. 16.

1 Cor. viii.
11.

^a Ὁ γὰρ ἁμαρτάνων ἐπὶ τὴν εἶδιν τινα ὅμοια αὐτῷ δρῶντα, οἰκοδομηθήσεται εἰς τὸ τὰ αὐτὰ ποιεῖν.—Const. Ap. II. 17. [Cotel. Pat. Apost. Tom. I. p. 225]

^b Τύπτοντες αὐτῶν τὴν συνείδησιν ἀσθενούσαν.—1 Cor. viii. 12.

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which we can yield will requite: the wounds which we thereby do inflict may rankle and prove incurable; they assuredly will find no easy cure; they must however either in consequence or in the correction be very painful; and they will leave an ugly scar behind them.

The injustice of this practice may also further appear upon divers special accounts.

All men esteem pity a debt which one man oweth to another, as liable to grief and misery, (the obligation whereto is written in the bowels of each man;) which pity will incline to succour the object of it in danger or distress; wherefore every man by the natural law is bound to endeavour the prevention or the rescue of another falling into mischief; according to that of St Jude, *Of some have compassion, making a difference, and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire*; whence to draw men into sin by ill practice, or not to restrain them from it by good, is unjust, as a pitiless, hard-hearted, cruel thing^c.

Jude 22,
23.

Again; All men hold flattery to be a practice very abusive, or more than simply wrongful; as with injury joining contempt and cozenage; taking advantage of a man's infirmity to work prejudice to him; it is indeed a mischievous, a pernicious, and withal a perfidious, an insidious, an ensnaring practice; for, *A flattering mouth*, saith the Wise Man, *worketh ruin*; and, *A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet*: but flattery is not only verbal; the worst flattery is not that whereby men soothe and gloze with their lips, encouraging

Prov. xxvi.
28;
xxix. 5;
xxxi. 30.

^c *His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.*—
1 Sam. iii. 13.

others by fictitious commendations to persist in bad courses; there is a tacit flattery, when by our connivance at sin we seem to approve it; there is a real flattery, when by our compliance with sin we recommend it to our camerades; these do not look so grossly, yet do insinuate our mind, and commonly do inveigle to sin more effectually; men being more apt to trust our deeds than our words, being more pleased in our vouching their actions by a participation in them, and running a common hazard with them, than in our straining to commend or to excuse them: whence it is, that gross flattery hath its effect chiefly upon simpler folks, but this subtle flattery doth often gull and abuse persons of greatest capacity.

Again; A good conversation before men is a part of that due respect which we owe to them. There is a regard and a kind of reverence to be had toward every man; which should engage us to behave ourselves decently in his presence, signifying a consideration and esteem of his person, of his opinion, of his resentment, of his affection toward us: to do any foul or unhandsome thing is a contempt of him, a rudeness toward him, an affront put on him; whereby in effect we do slight, disparage, and reproach him; implying, that we do little value his judgment, that we care not for his good-will; that we presume he hath not the sense to discern, or hath not the spirit to dislike, or must have the patience to comport with our unseemly and unsavoury carriage. And if to do other unhandsome things before men is such an indignity offered to them, then it is especially such to commit sin before them, which is the most ugly, the most

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LIV.

Prov. xiv.
21; xi. 12.

1 Pet. ii.
17.

sordid, the most loathsome behaviour that can be ; there is no deformity, no turpitude in nature comparable to sin ; nothing so offensive, so distasteful, so abominable to a rational sense ; so that the Wise Man's saying is very true, taken any way, *He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth* : it is both a sin to contemn him, and sinning is an argument of contempt toward him ; nor can we better observe St Peter's injunction, that we honour all men than by forbearing to sin in their presence, out of respect to them. But further,

4 Let us consider, that a good conversation before men is a public benefit, a great advantage to the world and common state of men.

It is not only a good office of charity to this or that man ; but it layeth a general obligation on our country, on our age, on posterity itself ; upon which a fruitful life, an exemplary virtue may have notable influence.

As notorious sin is a plague to the world, throwing infection and death about it ; provoking the wrath of heaven, and thence deriving vengeance on it ; so notable virtue is a general blessing, producing most wholesome and comfortable effects to mankind.

For how can one more oblige the public, than by conferring help to uphold the reputation, and to propagate the entertainment of those things, which are the main props of the world, for the sake of which it standeth, and by the means of which it is sustained ; than by preserving the virtue and power of conscience, which is the band of all society, the guardian of faith and honesty, the best ensurer of justice, order, and peace in the state, (that which

exalteth a nation, and establisheth a kingdom;) than by producing and promoting those things which certainly will procure the favour and blessing of God on any people?

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LIV.

Prov. xiv.
34; xx. 28;

How can a man better deserve of the world, than by concurring to stop the contagion of sin, and the overspreading deluge of iniquity, together with all the lamentable mischiefs consequent on them; than by averting the fierce wrath and severe judgments of God, which a general prevalence of wickedness necessarily will bring down?

Most men pretend to be concerned even for the honour of their country; and how can we better promote that, than by checking the progress of sin, which will not only be the bane, but is, as Solomon telleth us, *The reproach of any people?*

xiv. 34.

It may possibly be, it hath really been, that the conspicuous virtue of a few men (yea sometimes of one single person) hath leavened a country, hath seasoned an age, hath imbued posterity with an admiration of goodness, and with an affection to it. *One man*, saith St Chrysostom, *inflamed with zeal may suffice to reform an entire people*^d. So among the pagans one person did set up the study of morality, and worthily was styled, *The parent of* (that most useful) *philosophy*^e; whereby he did exceedingly benefit mankind, and did confer much toward preparing men for the reception of our heavenly philosophy.

Such our Lord designed his Apostles to be; for, *Ye*, saith he, *are the lights of the world, ye are the*

Matt. v. 13,
14.

^d Ἀρκεῖ εἰς ἄνθρωπος ζήλω πεπυρωμένος ὁλόκληρον διορθώσασθαι δῆμον.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. α'. [Opp. Tom. vi. p. 461.]

^e Socrates philosophiæ parens.—Cic. [de Fin. ii. 1.]

SERM.
LIV.

2 Cor. ii.
14.

Phil. iii. 17.
1 Cor. xi. 1;
iv. 16.
2 Thess. iii.
7, 9.

2 Pet. ii. 5.

Gen. xviii.
32.

Jer. v. 1.

Ezek. xxii.
30.

Isai. i. 9.
1 Kings
xix. 14, 18.

salt of the earth; and such in effect they did prove, *God by them*, as St Paul saith, *manifesting the savour of his knowledge in every place*; they not only by their heavenly doctrine, but chiefly by the lustre and influence of their holy example, converting the world from impious errors and naughty practices unto true Religion and virtuous conversation; they did lead men to goodness not only by the ears, but by the eyes, seeing their excellent life, and walking as they had them for ensamples.

It consequently may be, yea hath been, that the singular integrity of one, or of a few persons, displaying itself, hath appeased Divine wrath, and hath staved off imminent ruin from a people. So

one Noah, publicly maintaining and preaching righteousness, did preserve the whole race of men from extirpation; so ten persons avowing righteousness would have kept Sodom from that rueful destruction; so one good man (notably owning God, and interposing for the concerns of piety) might have prevented that calamitous vengeance which fell upon Israel; as Jeremy told before, and Ezekiel affirmed after it; *Run ye to and fro*, saith God in Jeremy, *through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh truth, and I will pardon it:*

and, I sought for a man, saith God in Ezekiel, *among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none; therefore have I poured mine indignation upon them:* there was then

a remnant of those who closely did serve God; and perhaps seven thousand unknown persons, who had

not in their hearts deserted Religion; but this did not avert God's wrath, or preserve the nation from captivity; as a few openly professing and resolutely practising goodness might have done.

SERM.
LIV.

Now who would not be glad of being so public a friend, so general a benefactor, in performing that which doth otherwise so much become him, and so greatly behove him; yielding him the best ornaments and highest advantages even upon his private account? who would not be ambitious both to oblige his country, and to save his own soul together, by a worthy conversation?

Assuredly nothing can be devised more conducive to the effecting a reformation and amendment of the world, (and consequently to the prosperity and felicity of mankind here,) than a conspiracy of good men in a frank and brisk avowing of goodness in the face of the world.

5 A care of our conversation in the sight of men is needful for the preservation of our good name and fair repute among them.

A good name in Holy Scripture is represented as a special gift and blessing of God, bestowed in recompense of piety and virtue, and preferred before other most considerable gifts and blessings concerning our external state; for, *By humility, saith the Wise Man, and the fear of the Lord are riches and honour*; both are the rewards of piety; but comparing them, *A good name*, saith he, *is rather to be chosen than great riches*: it cannot therefore be a contemptible thing, nor ought it to be neglected by us; for none of God's gifts, no reward which he proposeth, ought to be slighted.

1 Chron.
xxix. 12.
Eccles. vi.
2; vii. 1.

Prov. xxii.
4.
Ps. cxii. 9.
Prov. xxii.
1.

Reason and experience also do concur in shew-

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LIV.

ing, that a good repute is a valuable thing, not only as a fair ornament of our persons, and a commodious instrument of action toward our private welfare, as a guard of our safety and quiet, as serving to procure divers conveniences of life; but as very advantageous^f, very useful upon moral and spiritual accounts; qualifying us with greater ease and efficacy to serve God, and to do good; for, indeed, it is manifest, that without it we shall be incapable of doing God or man any considerable service.

Wherefore in duty and wisdom we should be careful of preserving this jewel; the which we cannot otherwise do, than by observing this apostolical rule, of providing things honest in the sight of all men; for a good conversation is the only guard and convoy of a good name: how can men conceive good opinion of us, otherwise than from a view of worthy qualities and good deeds? They may charitably hope, but they cannot confidently judge well of us, otherwise than upon good evidence: *Ye shall know them by their fruits*, (that is, by apparent works, falling under human cognizance,) is the rule whereby our Saviour teacheth us to distinguish of men, and to build a right opinion concerning them. Honour is the shadow, the inseparable attendant of conspicuous virtue.

Matt. vii.
16; xii. 33.

A good conversation will, indeed, command esteem and irresistibly extort respect from all men.

Wise and good men heartily will approve it, and gladly will yield it due commendation; they cannot but honour it whenever they see it, as best

Rom. xiv.
18.

^f Δι' οἰκονομίαν τινα. — M. Ant. iv. § 19.

suiting with their own judgment and with their affection. SERM.
LIV.

Yea, it will procure respect even from the worst men; for it is a mistake to think, that bad men really do or can despise true goodness: in truth, however they may pretend or make a show to slight and scorn it, however in words they may flout and revile it, yet in their hearts they cannot but admire and reverence it; although their will may be so perverted as to set them against it, yet their reason cannot be so destroyed (or natural light so quenched in them) as to disapprove it; they do but vilely dissemble, and belie their conscience, when they make as if they did condemn or contemn it: *As, saith St Chrysostom, they who openly do flatter ill livers, do in their mind reprove them; so they who envy the workers of good, in their conscience will admire and approve them^s:* at least they will do thus in their sober mind; when with any serious application they do reflect on things; when the eye of their soul is anywise cleared from the mists of lust and passion: it is not to be heeded what they say in a fluster or ranting mood, when they are near out of their wits, and have their judgment stifled by sensual imaginations; but what they think when their mind is somewhat composed, and natural light doth shine freely in it.

Indeed, such wretches really do most despise those who consort and comply with them in sinful follies; as they cannot in their hearts honour

^s Οἱ ἐν βασκανίᾳ τοῦτο ποιοῦντες, κατὰ τὸ συνειδὸς ὑμᾶς θαυμάσονται, καὶ ἀποδέξονται· ὥσπερ οὖν οἱ φανερώς κολακεύοντες τοὺς ἐν πονηρίᾳ ζῶντας, κατὰ νοῦν διαβάλλουσι.—Chrys. in Matt. v. 16. [Opp. Tom. II. p. 101.]

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LIV.

themselves, so they cannot esteem those whom they find like unto them; especially they despise those whom they observe to be so base and silly, as against their own judgment and conscience to fear their displeasure or to regard their censure; looking upon them as vassals to their humour, and renegadoes from their own conscience.

Moreover, a good conversation certainly will engage Almighty God to protect our reputation, and to confer honour upon us. For he as Governor of the world, the Patron of goodness, the Dispenser of proper rewards to all, is in a manner bound to encourage those openly who visibly do own him and take his part, who promote his glory and interest, who pay him due service and obedience, who in regard to his authority do faithfully pursue that which is right and good; he surely will see fit to repay such in the same kind, by openly acknowledging, countenancing, and honouring them: accordingly he hath tied himself to do so by his express word and promise; for, *Them*, saith he, *that honour me I will honour; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed*: he said it in reference to old Eli, who had neglected the duty of restraining his sons from sin; which is a case very much of kin to all neglect of exemplary piety. And, *Whosoever*, saith our Lord, *shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God; but he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God*: the which (one most comfortable, the other most terrible) sentences are to be understood, he that confesseth our Lord not merely by verbal profession, (for divers such who say, Lord, Lord, he will not so much as

i Sam. ii.
30;

iii. 13.

Luke xii. 8.

Matt. vii.
22, 23.

know at the final judgment,) but in real practice; he that denieth him, not only by renouncing him with the tongue, but by disobeying him in scandalous conversation, by working iniquity, by the apostasy of bad manners.

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LIV.

6 Lastly; The public discharge of a good conscience will yield manifold advantages and great benefits to ourselves; not only as good (and thence needful to our salvation and our comfort) but as public; some of which I shall touch.

Such a practice will much secure and strengthen us in goodness; for he that hath the heart with resolution and constancy to do well, notwithstanding any worldly discouragement, although he thereby doth cross the humour of the world, and incurreth the displeasure, envy, hatred, censure, and obloquy of men, he thus having exalted his virtue above the favour and fear of the world, hath set it in a safe place, hath rendered it impregnable.

The consideration of having attained so happy and so worthy a victory over the most dangerous temptations (the victory of faith over the world) will be very comfortable; and the sufferings which (from the disfavour, enmity, and opposition of men) do attend such a practice, being a kind of martyrdom, will yield all the joys and comforts (together with the hopes and rewards) of an heroical patience.

It will afford great satisfaction of mind to reflect on the consequences of such a practice; and to consider that our resolution hath engaged or confirmed others in goodness, hath preserved them from sin, hath withdrawn them from bad courses, and saved them from perdition; that we have been instru-

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LIV.

Ezek. xiii.
22.

2 Tim. ii.
26.

1 Sam.
xxv. 32.

Prov.
xxviii. 23;
xxvii. 6;
xix. 25.

mental to the salvation and happiness of any soul; that, beside our own sins, (which are a burden too heavy for any man well to bear,) we have not the sins of others to account for, and shall not be loaded with the guilt of those, whom our neglect of duty, our compliance with sin, our stupid coldness and indifference in regard to spiritual affairs, our dissimulation or connivance at the scandalous violation of God's honour and transgression of his laws, might have encouraged in sin; that we are not liable to that reproof in the Prophet, *Ye have strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way.*

We shall highly oblige those whom by our good endeavour or example we shall convert to righteousness, or reclaim from iniquity, or shall anywise stop in their career to ruin; who when they shall recover from their error, and soberly reflect on their case, (when they shall *ἀνανήψειν*, become again sober, getting out as it were of their drunken fit,) will heartily thank us, will bless us, will pray for us, as having laid on them a very great obligation, and done them the greatest kindness that could be; so that they will be ready to say to us, as David did to Abigail, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who sent thee this day to meet me: and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from shedding of blood: this will be the consequence of plain dealing in such cases, and that will be fulfilled which the Wise Man saith, He that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall find more favour, than he that flattereth with the tongue.*

We thereby shall escape the sore complaints and fell curses of those whom our naughty or care-

less demeanour hath involved in sinful practice; for when their conscience is awakened into a sense of their guilt, when they feel the stings of remorse, when they perceive the extreme damage and woe which they have incurred, then will they discharge their resentments of heart against those, who have anywise been accessory to their fall into such a condition; then in their bitterness of soul, in the agony of their sorrow and perplexity, they will be apt to exclaim, Cursed be the day that I knew such an one, or that I did converse with him, who did betray me into this plight, who did inveigle me into temptation, who did not pluck me back from that sinful practice by which I now so deeply suffer; cursed be his base cowardice, his fond modesty, his affected wisdom, his treacherous negligence, his unconscionable indifference, his impious want of zeal for God's honour and charity for my soul, which did keep him from checking me in my bad courses and reclaiming me to my duty by wholesome reproof, by seasonable advice, by exemplary practice before me: it will surely be a great comfort to us, that we have not given occasion for such complaints; but in proportion may say with St Paul, *I am pure from the blood of all men; for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*

SERM.
LIV.

Acts xx.
26.
Ezek.
xxxiii. 7, 9.

It is also no small advantage to us, that by a good conversation we shall procure the particular friendship and affection of good men; for it is that which discovereth good men to one another, which kindleth their affection toward each other, which draweth them together, and breedeth a familiarity between them, and knitteth their hearts together in a holy love; from whence they come to enjoy the

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LIV.

faithful advice, the kind assistance, the seasonable consolations, and the hearty prayers each of other; the which great benefits are lost by concealment of ourselves, and reservedness in doing good; for how can any man know him to deserve love, whose goodness is not discernible?

Such considerations may induce all persons, of every rank and condition, to observe this apostolical precept, so far as their capacities do reach; I shall only adjoin, that it especially doth concern persons of quality, in proportion to their eminency in dignity, power, authority, reputation, or any peculiar advantage, whereby the beneficial efficacy of good conversation is increased.

Matt. v.
14.

Such persons are like a city seated on a mountain, which cannot be hid; the height of their station and lustre of their quality do expose them to the observation of all; and their authority doth recommend their practice to the imitation of observers.

Their example cannot fail of having a mighty influence; its light doth guide men, its weight doth sway them; it doth seem to warrant and authorize practice; inferiors would be afraid or ashamed to discost from it.

They have not the temptations which other men have to comply with sin out of fear, out of complaisance, out of design; they being to lead and give law, not to follow or receive it; they being the first movers in conversation; the fashion being regulated by them, or indeed being merely a conformity to their deportment.

They should by their innocence^h qualify them-

^h Const. Apost. II. 17. [Cotel. Pat. Apost. Tom. I. p. 225.]

selves to reprove others with authority and courage.

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LIV.

They in gratitude to God, who hath bestowed on them such advantages, are obliged to employ them for his service.

They particularly were designed and endowed with those advantages, that by them they might countenance, might encourage, might reward, might by all means promote goodness in the world.

Rom. xiii.
3—6.
I Pet. ii.
14.

They accordingly are responsible for the influence their conversation hath; so that in the final account most actions of men will lie at their door, so that they shall respectively be either highly rewarded for the virtues and good works, or severely punished for the vices and sins of mankind: the which most weighty consideration I leave by God's grace to be seriously applied by them who are concerned therein.

SERMON LV.

PROVIDE THINGS HONEST IN THE SIGHT OF
ALL MEN.

2 COR. VIII. 21.

*Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the
Lord, but also in the sight of men.*

SERM.
LV.

IF we observe the world, we may easily therein discern many persons, who being inwardly well disposed (standing right both in judgment and affection to goodness) are yet loath to appear very good, and hardly will own Christian virtue in the constant discharge of public duties, or in strict abstinence from sinful practices; but commonly (against the dictate of their reason, and sense of their heart) neglect the one, and comply with the other: an odd sort of hypocrites or dissemblers; who studiously conceal their better part, and counterfeit themselves worse than they are; who adore God in their hearts, and address devotions to him in their closets, but scarce will avow him in their visible profession and practice; who have a conscience, but are shy of disclosing it, or letting it take air, and walk in open light, confining it as a criminal to close restraint or obscure retirement; who gladly would be religious and stanch, if there might be no notice taken of it, but take care of being remarkable (or as it were scandalous) for it; who think fit to compromise and compound the business between God and the world,

maintaining a neutrality and correspondence with both, so as privately to court the one and publicly to close with the other. SERM.
LV.

Such practice is flatly repugnant to that rule, which elsewhere in precept, and here by his own example, the holy Apostle doth recommend to us; directing us not only before God, (that is, in our heart, and in our secret retirements, which God alone doth behold,) but also *before all men*, ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων, that is, in our external and visible conversation, carefully to perform things good and laudable, eschewing whatever is bad or culpable. Rom. xii.
17.

Our obligation to which rule hath already been confirmed by divers other precepts in Holy Scripture, concurring in the injunction of it; and its observance urged by various positive considerations of great weight and force, (declaring how necessary it is for promoting God's honour and glory, how requisite it is for maintaining the dignity of our profession, and advancing the interests of goodness, how charity and justice toward our neighbour do exact it from us, how conducive it is to the public benefit of mankind, and how advantageous in many respects to our own particular welfare;) and not insisting further upon those considerations, I shall now only enforce it by scanning the common principles, grounds, motives, pretences or excuses of the contrary practice, which I before touched, of openly deserting virtue, or declining the performance of duty before men; and by shewing how very foolish and vain, how very naughty and base, how very mischievous, dangerous, and pernicious they are.

SERM.
LV.

They chiefly are those which I shall immediately touch and reflect upon.

Jer. i. 8.

I Men commonly in their visible conversation do neglect their duty, or comply with sin out of modesty; because they are ashamed of doing that which may expose them to some disgrace or censure; because virtuous practice may raise distaste in the company, and provoke the scorn of those with whom they converse; because such a point of duty is out of request, and slighted in the world; they are afraid of men's faces; their tender forehead cannot sustain derision, or endure to be flouted for being out of the mode, and wearing an uncouth garb of conscience.

But this plainly is a perverse and unmanly modesty; a fond, a vile, a shameful shame: fie on it! should any man be ashamed of that, which is his chief beauty, his best ornament, his sole dignity and glory? should a man be ashamed of being evidently wise in his conduct, of following his reason, of consulting his true interest, of pursuing his own certain welfare and felicity? is it fit that any man should be ashamed of paying due acknowledgment, of yielding due reverence, of rendering due gratitude, of performing due service to his Creator, sovereign Lord, and great Benefactor; to whom he oweth all, upon whose will he entirely dependeth, at whose absolute disposal he is? Surely these are no shameful things, but such rather wherein we ought to have the greatest confidence, which we ought to perform with the greatest assurance.

If we are bashful, let us be so in regard to things which are truly shameful; let us be ashamed of sin, that is, of our most real deformity, our tur-

pititude, our disgrace, our wretchedness; the which, indeed, is the only dishonourable and despicable thing; the which did first produce shame, and did introduce it into the world, (for while innocence did abide, there was no shame,) and the which will ever carry shame along as its inseparable adherent: it would, indeed, become us to blush at our horrible unworthiness and detestable ingratitude toward our bountiful Lord, and most gracious Redeemer; it were proper for us to be confounded at our extreme folly and foul treachery toward ourselves, in betraying our souls to guilt, to regret, to wrath and punishment: who should be ashamed, who not, the holy Psalmist hath well taught us, *Let none that wait on thee be ashamed; let them be ashamed which transgress without cause: and, Let the proud be ashamed—but let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed.*

SERM.
LV.

Gen. iii. 2,
10; ii. 25.

Ps. xxv. 3;
cxix. 78—
80.

It is true modesty to be ashamed of doing unworthy and unhandsome things; but to be ashamed of doing what reason and duty require, is pitiful weakness of mind.

We do not owe so much regard to vicious and vain persons, as to be dashed out of countenance by them; we should rather by our masculine resolution and upright confidence put them to confusion.

Tit. ii. 8.

If shame be an evil which we would avoid, the only remedy thereof we may learn from those words of the Psalmist, *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to thy testimonies:* but it is a fond course to shun disgrace by doing that which alone deserveth it.

Ps. cxix. 6.

Is it not also a wild thing to seem modest toward men, while we are really so bold with God,

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LV.

Is. lxv. 3.
Jer. vi. 17;
viii. 12.

as presumptuously to offend him, to affront him, to provoke him (as those in the Prophet did) to his face? for so, indeed, every sinner doth; and as it is the greatest inadvertency not to consider God alway present with us, so it is the height of impudence to sin in his presence, or to prefer a regard to men before the reverence due to his eye^a.

Wisd. iv.
20.

Jer. xxii.
22.

Rom. vi.
21.

Dan. xii. 2.

Is it not also great folly for declining a little present transient disgrace, to do that whereof afterward we shall be grievously and perpetually ashamed; which we shall never remember or reflect upon without confusion, (according to that of the Apostle, *What fruit had ye of those things whereof ye are now ashamed?*) the consequence whereof is our standing obnoxious to shame and everlasting contempt?

Luke ix.
26; xii. 9.
2 Tim. ii.
12.

If we be thus ashamed of God, and of our duty to him, may he not justly in recompense be ashamed of us, and disdain to own us in favour and mercy? He will surely, he hath often declared so; *Whosoever, saith our Lord, shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.*

2 Another principle, near of kin to the former, disposing men to commit sin, or wave duty in their open conversation, is fear of losing the good-will, or getting the ill-will of men.

It must often happen, that whoever will be virtuous, and stick to his duty, will forfeit the favour of men, will incur their displeasure, will provoke their indignation; by crossing their humour and

^a Quid quæso rationis habet verecundari ad diem hominis, et vultum Dei non vereri?—Bern. Ep. cviii. [Opp. Tom. i. col. 116 B.]

conceit, by implicitly slighting their opinion and condemning their practice: this is the portion and fate of strict and stiff piety; the friendship of God and the world are not well consistent; and St Paul's rule may be converted, *If I should please men, I should not be the servant of Christ*: hence men, prizing the favour of men with the advantages of it, and dreading their anger, hatred, disdain, with the mischiefs consequent on them, are scared from their duty.

SERM.
LV.

James iv. 4.

1 John ii.

15.

Gal. i. 10.

But in truth this is a silly, a base, a sorry fear, arguing wretched meanness of spirit, and pitiful cowardice. For

Dost thou, fond wretch, fear to lose the favour of man, whose favour doth avail nothing to thy main interests, and cannot anywise considerably benefit thee, (for in no respect dost thou depend on his will and providence,) but dost not fear being deprived of God's favour, upon which all thy good hangeth, wherein thy felicity consisteth, without which thou art incapable of any prosperity, of any security, of any joy or comfort?

Dost thou fear the displeasure of man, of poor impotent man, a sorry frail worm, *Whose breath is in his nostrils*, (ready to fly away in every moment,) whose anger can do thee no real harm, whose power can hardly touch thee, can nowise reach thy soul or its concerns; whilst thou darest not to offend the eternal Almighty God, under whose feet thou liest, ready to be crushed into nothing, or stamped down into hell at his pleasure?

Job xxv. 6.

Isai. ii. 22.

Matt. x. 28.

Darest thou not, O heartless dastard, to do that which is in thy power easily to do, which thou art infinitely concerned to do, which upon so many

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accounts thou art obliged to do, out of fear to cross thine equal, yea, far thine inferior in this case; for he that standeth to his duty, as he hath the better cause, so he hath the greater force, and assuredly will defeat all his opposers?

Art thou, O pusillanimous slave, in regard to any creature, thy fellow-subject and servant, afraid of expressing thy loyalty to thy sovereign Lord, thy love to infinite goodness, thy gratitude to thy best friend and kindest benefactor, thy reverence toward the divine majesty, thine awe of uncontrollable power? is this a reasonable, an excusable, a tolerable fear?

Surely if ever to be driven out of heart is reproachful, if ever to be cowed doth argue infirmity and abjectness of spirit, it is in this case; when we have all the reason and obligation in the world to be most courageous and resolute, to fear no colours, to make our party good against all opposition; when we have the greatest necessity to engage us, and the greatest advantage to encourage us to hold out stoutly; the greatest necessity, seeing all that we have, our life, our salvation, our eternal weal doth lie at stake; *For it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life:* the greatest advantage, for that if we will, we are invincible, and assured of an easy victory, seeing we take part with God, and have omnipotency on our side; so that we can say with David, *The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me: The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?*

Deut.
xxxii. 47.
Ps. cxviii.
6.
Heb. xiii. 6.
Ps. lvi. 11;
xi. 4;
xxvii. 1, 3;
xlvi. 2.
Jer. i. 8;
xx. 11.
Isai. xli. 10.
Gen. xxvi.
24; xv. 1.
Num. xiv.
9. Deut.
xxxi. 8.
2 Chron.
xx. 17.

There is not indeed, to those who are under God's special protection, and confide in him, any

thing in nature really formidable or terrible: it is his peculiar attribute to be the mighty and terrible One; he recommendeth himself to us as *Our fear*, that is, the special object of it; we therefore do sacrilegiously wrong him, by fearing any other thing in such cases of competition, and when we are concerned to fear him; whence then we are prohibited to fear the greatest powers in the world; *Fear not them which kill the body*, (if God permit them,) *but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.*

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Jer. v. 22;
x. 7.
Rev. xv. 4.
Deut. vii.
21; x. 17;
xxviii. 58.
Ps. lxxvi. 7,
11; xcix. 3.
Is. viii. 12,
13; xli. 10.

Matt. x.
26, 28.

Who, saith St Peter, is he that will (or that can) harm you, *τίς ὁ κακώσων ὑμᾶς*, if ye be followers of that which is good?—wherefore be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, (by a pure confidence in him.)

1 Pet. iii.
13, 14, 15.

In such cases, we should be ready to accost the greatest potentates in terms like those of the three brave youths in Daniel; *O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But (however) if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship thy golden image which thou hast set up. And if, in imitation of so worthy an example, we should defy the wrath of the greatest kings, demanding any sinful compliance from us, how poor a thing is it to fear the displeasure of sorry companions enticing us to the like! how much more should we defy all the crew of hectorly ruffians and huffing braggadocios!*

Dan. iii.
16—18.

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Prov.
xxviii. 1.

While wicked profane men are so bold and stout in impugning goodness, we should be courageous in defence of it. *The righteous is as bold as a lion.*

The fear of God (the which is most reasonable and prudent, and consistent with the bravest courage) should exclude the fear of men; the which is no less vain than base; the which, indeed, doth involve the wildest boldness, and most rash foolhardiness in the world, pushing us into the most desperate adventures that can be; while by sinning we incense the most dreadful anger, we invade the most formidable power, we incur the most horrible dangers, we run headlong into the jaws of death and hell: such a mixture there is of base cowardice and mad audacity in practices issuing from that principle.

3 Men commonly do neglect the open practice of virtue out of care to decline envy; for ill men seeing others endowed with worthy qualities, which they want; performing good deeds, from which their infirmity or pravity doth hold them averse; entitled to commendations, rewards, and advantages to which they cannot aspire, and whereby they seem to eclipse their credit, or impair their interest, or expose their unworthiness; cannot look on such persons without an evil eye, or without conceiving in their heart malevolent grudges at them, which they will be apt to vent in spiteful practices, endeavouring to supplant or blast their virtue; men are apt to envy the favourites of God, as they are of princes. Nor, indeed, doth any thing more powerfully incite men to hurt their neighbour than such malignity, being edged by that anguish which their sore eye doth feel; to shun which envy

and its mischievous effects, men commonly are tempted to withdraw its cause, their own virtue, that its bright lustre may not wound the sight of such neighbours.

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But thus to appease envy by deserting virtue^b is very fond and absurd. For

Shall I cast away my best goods, because another would not have me to enjoy them? shall I be terribly sick, to cure another's distempered fancy? shall I render myself miserable, because another doth not like to see me happy? because he doth want charity, must I forego innocence? because he doth not love me, shall I hate myself? to please him merely, without bettering him, to ease him of a wholesome smart, shall I displease God, and abuse myself?

Would he not be a silly man, who being envied, because he seemeth a favourite of his prince, would, to gratify such enviers, offend his prince? No surely, this is too fond a regard unto any man's base disposition, this is too great a gratification of an enemy's pleasure, this is too slavish a depression of a man's self: rather let him fret, let him torment himself, let him inflict a just punishment on his own uncharitable and unworthy humour; whereby perhaps he may be reduced to discern his folly and correct his fault.

Would any man upon such terms part with his estate, mar his business, slur his reputation, or purposely play the fool? would any man become poor, infamous, or contemptible, because to be rich, to be prosperous, to be honourable, to be wise, are

^b Invidiam placare paras virtute relictā?

Contemnere miser.—

Hor. Sat. II. 3. [13.]

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invidious things? Much less should a man upon that account neglect his duty, thereby betraying his soul, discarding the love and favour of God, destroying the satisfaction of his conscience, and forfeiting his hopes of felicity: damages and mischiefs comparable to which all the envy and spite in the world can nowise bring upon him.

If we would avoid envy, we should not do it by incurring a worse evil, and rendering ourselves contemptible for unworthiness; we should rather damp it by modesty, humility, an inoffensive tenour of life.

We should surmount it, and quash it by constant blameless conversation: the which will kill the envious or the envy.

An unquestionable virtue will stop the mouth of detraction, and drive envy into corners, not daring to shew itself against it.

4 A common principle, from whence neglect of duty and commission of sin in visible conversation doth spring, is a fear of infamy and reproach, whereto the strict practice of virtue is liable; men not enduring to bear the odious censures, the foul imputations, the ugly characters, the scurvy epithets, and opprobrious names, wherewith the bold and spiteful enemies of goodness are wont to asperse and brand its faithful adherents.

To be deemed weak, credulous, superstitious, formal, timorous, nice, squeamish, scrupulous, strait-laced, conceited, affected, cross, surly, morose, forward, stubborn, pertinacious, proud.

To be termed a foppish simpleton, doting on speculations, and enslaved to rules; a fantastical humourist, a precise bigot, a rigid stoic, a demure

sneaksby, a clownish singularist, or nonconformist to ordinary usage, a stiff opiniatre; a man of a pitiful narrow spirit, pent up within a small compass, confined by principles, fettered by laws, living in bondage to his conscience.

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These and the like harsh censures, foul reproaches, and abusive scoffs, even all which invention quickened by envy, choler, rancorous spite, and aided by the malicious fiend, can suggest, wherewith the profane crew of men usually do conspire to daub and persecute those who refuse to comply with their unconscionable extravagancies and impieties, men can hardly brook; and thence to shun them yield up all, cross their reason, prostitute their conscience, violate all their obligations; choosing rather to be justly reproachable for bad actions, than unjustly reproached for good.

Ps. lvii. 3, 4.

But with such a person, who is thus diverted from his duty, let me expostulate.

Dost thou well to regard what unbridled tongues out of a wanton mind and corrupt heart do sputter and foam? Shall thy practice depend on their loose wit or licentious talk, so that thou must do nothing which they shall not be in humour to commend^c?

Wilt thou renounce all wisdom, abandon thy best interest, forfeit thy happiness, to decline a squib or a flirt^d?

Would not he be a stark fool, who would be railed or jeered out of his way in travel, out of his business in traffic, out of his estate or real interest upon any occasion? and is he not evidently far

^c Quid turpius, quam sapientis vitam ex insipientium sermone pendere?—Cic. de Fin. II. [15. 50.]

^d Quid de te alii loquantur, ipsi videant.—Scipio apud Cic. in Somn. [§ 7.]

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Ps. cxix.
51.

more such, who will be flouted out of his duty, out of his salvation, out of any spiritual advantage? Was not the practice of David more advisable, who said, *The proud have had me in derision; yet have I not declined from thy law?*

David, a great king, a man of singular courage and gallantry, a glorious hero; yet even him did bold and base people deride. Whom will not profane impudence assail? whom will not they attempt to deter from goodness?

Art thou so blind as not to discern whence it cometh that they disparage virtue? that is, from their extreme vanity and rashness, which move them to speak any thing without consideration or discretion; from their great naughtiness and weakness, their being bewitched with pleasure and besotted with vice, which engageth them to take part so furiously with them; from their malignity and spite against that which crosseth their fond humours and exorbitant lusts; from their pride, which swelleth against those who by contrary practice dissent from their folly, and reprove their wickedness, and eclipse their reputation; from their envy, which repineth at thy appearing better and happier than themselves, thy excelling them in true worth, thy enjoying that satisfaction which they want, thy attaining that blessed hope to which they cannot aspire: and seeing that their reproaches do issue from such principles, wilt thou regard them?

Are their words any slander, who being professed enemies of goodness do naturally impugn it by the readiest arms they have, a virulent and petulant tongue^e?

^e Οὐδεὶς φαῦλος τοὺς σπουδαίους ἐπαινεῖν ὑπομένει.—Isidor Pelus. Ep. II. [Opp. p. 224 D.]

Can their dirty language, bespattering good things, alter their nature, or render that dishonourable and odious, which in itself is most excellent, most amiable, most venerable, most useful and profitable?^f

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Is it not, indeed, a commendation of virtue, which should encourage us the more to like it, to honour it, to embrace it, that vain, wild, dissolute persons, distempered in their minds, notoriously void of discretion, of integrity, of sobriety, do pretend to vilify and disgrace it?^g

1 Pet. ii.
15.
2 Thess. iii.
2.

As their commendation is of no worth, so their reproach is less considerable.

Dost thou not disparage thine own judgment by heeding theirs, or suffering it to be of any consideration with thee in the conduct of thy life?^h

Dost thou take them to be serious in this, or to speak in good earnest, when they reproach virtue, and slight the plain dictates of reason, the clear light of natural conscience, the express commands of God, the apparent concerns of their own soul? they who are sober in nothing, how can they be serious in this, why should they seem judicious in such a case?ⁱ

^f Τί δόξεις, ἄφες.—M. Ant. viii. § 1.

Οὐ γὰρ δοκεῖν ἄριστος, ἀλλ' εἶναι θέλει.—

[Æschyl. Sept. c. Th. 592.]

Τὸ δὲ δοκεῖν, οὐδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ ὄναρ ἀλλότριον.—Greg. Naz. [Or. xxxvi. (de Sede Const.) Opp. Tom. i. p. 639 D.]

^g Malis displicere, laudari est.—Sen. Excerpt.

Nec potest bonus non esse, qui bonis placet. Nec minus validum argumentum mihi videtur, quod bonus sit, si malis e regione displiceat.—Bern. [Ep. ccxlix. Opp. Tom. i. col. 248 B.]

^h Quanta dementia est vereri, ne infameris ab infamibus?—Sen. Ep. xci. [19.]

ⁱ Moverer, si iudicio hoc facerent: nunc morbo faciunt.—Sen. Excerpt.

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Is it not evidently better to be slandered by giddy, lewd, ungodly wretches, who mind not what they say, nor care what they do, whose judgment therefore can signify nothing; than really to deserve reproof, and thence certainly to incur blame, from all staid, sober, considerate, wise, and virtuous persons, who judge advisedly and uprightly about things^k?

Is it not better to undergo their severest censure and most biting scoffs, than to be condemned of folly and baseness by thy own mind, and reviled by thy own conscience?

Is it not infinitely better to be unjustly defamed by men, than to be disreputed by God, exposed to most disgraceful condemnation at his bar, and thrown into that state of everlasting ignominy?

Is it not more tolerable to hear such language, than, having violated our duty and broken God's commands, one day to hear that dismal sentence, *Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire*^l?

Dan. xii. 2.
Matt. xxv.
41.

It is a glorious infamy which one sustaineth for the sake of righteousness^m.

Even heathens, with whom glory was the most ample reward and sweetest fruit of virtue, yet do enjoin that we should prefer conscience before it; and that we should rather gladly embrace infamy, than forsake virtueⁿ.

^k Ego cum a nostro Catone laudabar, vel reprehendi me a ceteris facile patiebar.—Cic. [Orat. XIII. 41.]

^l Tu ergo plus opprobria times quam tormenta? &c.—Bern. Ep. cviii. [Opp. Tom. I. col. 116 B.]

^m Æquissimo animo ad honestum consilium per mediam infamiam tendam. &c.—Sen. Ep. LXXXI. [18.]

ⁿ Non vis esse justus sine gloria? at mehercle sæpe justus esse debebis cum infamia.—Id. Ep. cxiii. [25.]

Vid. M. Ant. v. § 3. XI. § 16. IX. § 18.

It is the lot of all good men (for probation, exercise, and improvement of their virtue) to be persecuted, at least in some times, as when St Paul said, *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution*: and surely he that sincerely loveth God would even desire occasion of suffering somewhat for his sake, in testimony of his faithful affection: but what more tolerable persecution, what more easy martyrdom could we wish, than to be lashed by a scurrilous tongue: or rather to observe the ears of others to be infested with the buzzes of detraction? what is this but a little air stirred in vain, but a mere sound or blast of wind, importing nought to him that doth not mind it, or will not be affected with it? the which surely to a sound heart and pure conscience cannot be very sensible; a man must have a froward temper, or a tender ear, whom a little such creaking or grating noise doth much vex^o; all its force is broken, all its mischief is remedied easily, by neglect or contempt.

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2 Tim. iii.

12.
Acts xiv.

22.
Heb. xii. 6.

It is in a manner more commendable to suffer for being good, than for being a Christian; a truer martyrdom to suffer for the temper, than for the name of Christ; for doing well, than for professing truth.

Who, indeed, had ever been good, in any notable degree, if some had minded the opinion or the discourse of such men, whom in all times the great adversary of goodness and maligner of our welfare hath excited to deter men from virtue by thus abusing it? hath it not ever been the portion of good men to suffer in this kind?

Jer. xx. 7.
Ps. xliv.
16, 17;
lvii. 3, 4;
cxix. 51;
lxix. 10.
Job xii. 4.
Wisd. v. 3.

^o Quid stultius homine verba metuente?—Sen. Ep. xci. [19.]

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Heb. xii. 3. Was not our Lord himself, were not his apostles, were not all the prophets of old, were not all the heroes in goodness of all times thus pursued with obloquy? what vile imputation, what name of reproach can be devised, wherewith the spiteful world did not besmear them?

Yet were they much disturbed at it? were they anywise discouraged or scared by it from their duty? No; they rather did find satisfaction and delight in it; it rather did heighten their mind and strengthen their resolution; it begat a gallant and triumphant disdain of such injuries, enlivening and animating them in their career of duty; they did embrace reproach for righteousness not only with content, as their proper lot and portion from God's providence, but with joy, as their special glory and happiness from divine goodness; feeling it most true what our Master taught: *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Blessed are ye, when men—shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.* And, according to St Peter, *Ei ὀνειδίζεσθε, If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, (that is, for conscionably discharging any Christian duty,) happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth on you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.*

Acts v. 41.
2 Cor. xii.
10.

Matt. v. 11.

Luke vi.
22.

1 Pet. iv.
14.

In fine, it is all reason, and it is the express command of God, that in such cases we should not regard the censures or the reproaches of any mortal; it is

^P Ἐμπαιγμῶν καὶ μαστίγων πείραν ἔλαβον.—Heb. xi. 36. Διὰ δόξης καὶ ἀτιμίας.—2 Cor. vi. 8. Ὀνειδισμοῖς τε καὶ θλίψεσι θεατριζόμενοι.—Heb. xi. 33.

a part of duty to despise obloquy, to expose and lose reputation for God's sake. For, *Hearken*, saith he, SERM.
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unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in Isai. li. 7,
8.
whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.

5 Men commonly decline the public practice of duty out of affectation thereby to be deemed more honest and sincere, or to decline the suspicion of being hypocritical.

As this is the most obvious and usual calumny wherewith dissolute people do charge good men; so to men of generous disposition it is of all censures most poignant, as most crossing their temper; according to which as they hate to be, so they can hardly endure to be counted or called dissemblers; whence often they choose rather to seem indifferent to goodness, than zealously affected to it; they rather wave some points of duty, than, for the performance of them, expose themselves to that imputation.

But this proceeding is very unreasonable: for,

What can be more absurd, than to be really and notoriously bad, (as whoever omitteth his duty is,) to prevent a surmise of being such? or to be truly worse than we should be, that we may not be deemed worse than we seem?

How can we more gratify the enemy of our salvation, than by approving ourselves in truth to be what he would falsely challenge us to be, mockers of God, and traitors to our own soul?

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Is it not a vain thing to regard that kind of censure which it is impossible for any man to escape, upon other terms than of being very naughty? for wicked men will never fail to load those with this charge, who will not comply with their follies, and run with them to the same excess of riot, or are any-wise better than themselves; it is inevitable for a stanch man not to be stigmatized for a hypocrite by them.

2 Cor. i. 12.
1 John iii.
21.

We have certainly more reason to be satisfied with the sure conscience and sense of our own integrity, than to be moved with the presumptuous assertions of any wretch devoid of justice or charity: his censure, being plainly injurious and contrary to all rules of equity, which prescribe that no man should judge of things unknown or uncertain, is utterly despicable.

1 John iii.
20.
1 Thess. ii.
4.
Gal. i. 10.
Col. iii. 23.
Eph. vi. 5.
1 Cor. iv.
4.
Jonah iii.
10.
Ps. xxxvii.
5;
6; vii. 9.

The testimony of God, (*Who is greater than our hearts,*) perfectly knowing our sincerity, may abundantly support us; it is a great wrong to him for us to value the rash suspicions of men, when we are secure of his knowledge, who seeth all our works, and trieth our hearts; who hath said, that, *If we commit our way to him, and trust in him, he will bring forth our righteousness as the light, and our judgment as the noonday.*

It is certainly better to be called hypocrite by men for doing our duty, than to be treated as a hypocrite by God for neglecting it; for all those who upon any account do violate God's laws shall have their portion with the hypocrites in that disconsolate place where is weeping and gnashing of teeth. And good reason; for indeed by thus avoiding hypocrisy, we really do incur it; by seek-

Matt. xxiv.
51.

ing to preserve an opinion of sincerity, we forfeit the reality of it; by the practice of disavowing the fear of God and care of goodness, we do constitute ourselves certain hypocrites and impostors; dissembling our thoughts, smothering our conscience, deluding our neighbours with false conceits of us, feigning that indifference which we have not, pretending to act without regret or remorse, which we cannot do; seeming otherwise than we are, signifying otherwise than we mean, doing otherwise than we judge fit, or like to do; that is, if we be not stark infidels, or utterly void of conscience.

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This is hypocrisy turned the wrong side outward, disguising a man in a fouler shape, and uglier garb, than that which is natural and true.

And if we compare the two hypocrisies, (that of pretending conscience which we want, and this of denying conscience which we have; that of seeming better than we are, this of seeming worse than we may be,) this in nature may well seem more vile, in tendency more dangerous, in effect more mischievous than the other.

There is in both the same falsehood, the same prevarication, the like contempt and abuse of God; but the hypocrite of whom we speak doeth worse things, more directly wrongful to God, more prejudicial to goodness, more harmful to the world.

The specious hypocrite, counterfeiting goodness, and, *Having a form of godliness, without the power* ^{2 Tim. iii.} and reality of it, doth yield to God some part (the ^{5.} exterior part) of his due honour and respect; but the sneaking hypocrite, disowning goodness, doth apparently desert, slight, and affront God: the one serveth God with his face and his voice, though his ^{Matt. xv.} 8.

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heart be far from him; the other doth not so much as sacrifice a carcass of obedience to him: that may bring some credit and advantage to goodness, strengthen its interest by his vote and countenance; this by not avowing it doth assuredly weaken its reputation and cause: that hypocrisy, as such, is a private and single evil, whereby a man doth indeed prejudice himself, but doth not injure his neighbour, yea, may edify him by the appearing (which in this respect is the same with the real) goodness of his example; but this hypocrisy is a general mischief, a scandalous evil, a contagious pestilence, whereby a man not only harmeth himself, but wrongeth many others, seducing them into dissoluteness, infecting the world with base indifference to good, and easiness to comply with sin.

It is, indeed, a sad thing, that God and goodness should be deserted upon this account; that most men should be so uncharitable, so unjust, so imprudent, as to suspect all good men of hypocrisy; as if it were incredible that any man should heartily love or fear God, (when it is rather strange that any man should do otherwise;) that any man in good earnest, or otherwise than in pretence and for sinister respects, should embrace virtue, (when it is marvellous that a reasonable man should decline it;) that so many, of themselves inclinable to goodness, should be so weak as to be deterred from it by so vain an apprehension; and that the name of hypocrisy should drive away piety; that it should become desirable, that hypocrites might abound in the world, lest Religion both in truth and show should be discarded.

In fine, we may otherwise suppress this odious imputation than by deserting goodness; we may

demonstrate ourselves serious and sincere by an inflexible adherence to it in the continual tenour of our practice; and especially in some instances of duty, which are hardly consistent with hypocrisy: for no man can hold long in a strained posture; no man will take much pains, or encounter great difficulties, or sustain grievous hardships and afflictions, cross his appetites, forego gains and honours, for that which he doth not heartily like and love: he may counterfeit in ceremonies and formalities, but he will hardly feign humility, meekness, patience, contentedness, temperance, at least uniformly and constantly. Even the patient enduring this censure will confute it, and wipe off the aspersion of hypocrisy.

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Matt. xxiii.
23.

SERMON LVI.

PROVIDE THINGS HONEST IN THE SIGHT OF
ALL MEN.

2 COR. VIII. 21.

*Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of
the Lord, but also in the sight of men.*

SERM.
LVI.

6 **A**NOTHER great impediment of good conversation before men is a desire of seeming courteous and civil. Men usually conform to sinful practices, because they would not be held clowns, rude and distasteful in conversation; they would not give offence to their company, by clashing with their humour; by preferring their own judgment, and seeming to be in their own conceit wiser and better than those with whom they converse; by provoking them to think they are held fools, or worse, by such non-compliance.

This is an ordinary snare to easy and ingenuous natures; but the ground of it is very unreasonable: for although in matters of indifference, where duty and sin do not fall into consideration, to be limber and ductile as can be, (which is the temper of the best metal,) to have no humour of our own, or to resign up all our humour to the will of our company, to condescend unto, and comport with, any thing; to raise no faction or debate, but presently to yield to the swaying vote; to become all things to all men in a ready complaisance, be wisdom and

good manners, doth argue good-nature, good understanding, good breeding; is a rightly gentle and obliging quality: SERM.
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Yet where duty is concerned, where sinning or not sinning is the case, there courtesy hath no room; there it is vain to pretend any engagement to complaisance.

For surely it is better to be held uncivil, than to be ungodly; it is far better manners to offend any number of men, than to be rude with God, to clash with his pleasure, to offer indignity and injury to him: there can be no competition in the case; no shadow of reason, why we should displease God to please men.

As it were more civil to offend ten thousand boors (peasants) than to affront our king; so to offend ten thousand kings than to affront our God were in policy more advisable, and in equity more justifiable: so the royal Psalmist did judge; for, *Princes, said he, did sit and speak against me, but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes:* so Moses, so Samuel, so Elias, so Jeremy, so Daniel, so the three noble children, so the holy Apostles did conceive; who being persons otherwise very courteous and gentle, yet had not that consideration of mighty princes, as not rather to approve their consciences to God, than to comply with their pleasure; how much less should we, upon pretence of courtesy toward inferior persons in ordinary conversation, transgress our duty?

Our own interest in such cases is too considerable to be sacrificed to the conceit or pleasure of any men: our salvation is no matter, wherein formality of respect should intervene, or have any weight; to

Ps. cxix.

^{23.}
Matt. x.

18.

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gain or forfeit our eternal happiness is no business of compliment or ceremony: it were a silly courtesy for a man to wait on his company to hell, a wild point of gallantry to be damned in complaisance.

Who would take himself to be obliged in good manners to hold on the round in a cup of poison; to leap down after those, who, from blind inadvertency, or wilful perverseness, tumble into a gulf, to gash or stab himself in conformity to some desperate folk? Much less can a man be engaged out of any such regard (in compliance with the mistake, weakness, or pravity of others) to incur guilt, to provoke divine wrath, to expose his soul to utter ruin, to undergo a damage, for which all the world cannot make any reparation or amends.

Is it not far better to disgust than to gratify those, who have so little consideration of our welfare; who, indeed, are very discourteous and heinously rude in offering to tempt us unto sin, to desire a compliance therein with them; to expect from us, that we should adventure so much for their vain satisfaction?

Indeed to gratify such persons were great and noble courtesy: but really to do it, we should not go this way; for this is a spurious courtesy, rather conspiracy and treachery, than courtesy.

It is in truth, at the bottom, great discourtesy (involving much unkindness, real abuse, unmerciful inhumanity and cruelty) to second, to countenance, to support or encourage any man in doing that which manifestly tendeth unto his great prejudice, to his utter bane.

It is the truest civility (implying real humanity, genuine charity, faithful kindness, and tender pity)

to stand off in such cases, and, by refusing (in a modest, gentle, discreet manner refusing) to concur in sin with our friends and companions, to check them, to warn them, to endeavour their amendment and retreat from pernicious courses; to exercise that compassion toward them, which St Jude calleth, *Pulling them out of the fire.*

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Jude 22,
23.

In such cases to repel them, yea to reprove them, is the greatest favour we can shew them; it is not only safe for ourselves, but kind to them, to observe St Paul's precept, *Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them;* for which deportment, whenever they come to themselves, and soberly reflect on things, they will thank and bless us; and it will happen as the Wise Man saith, *He that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with his tongue.*

Eph. v. 11,

7.

Prov.
xxviii. 23.

In fine, if we thoroughly scan the business, we shall find, that commonly it is not abundance of courtesy, but a defect of charity, or of conscience, or of courage, which disposeth us to reservedness, or to concurrence upon such occasions, in regard to unallowable practices.

7 Another snare which catcheth and holdeth us in open practice of sin, or neglect of duty, is deference to the opinion, authority, custom, or example of others; to the common opinion, to the authority of great and leading persons, to the fashion of the world, and prevalent humour of the age.

A man (not consulting or not confiding in his own reason) is apt to credit the vogue, to defer a kind of veneration to the general sentiments of men, (especially of men qualified,) apprehending

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that allowable or tolerable which men commonly by their practice seem to approve. He is prone to suspect his own judgment of mistake, when it doth thwart the opinion of so many; and hardly can have the heart to oppose his single apprehension against so common notions.

The commonness of sin and multitude of offenders doth in a manner authorize and warrant it, doth at least seem to excuse and extenuate it.

Ecclus.
xvi. 17.

A man easily conceiteth himself safe enough, while he is in the herd, while he walketh in the road, when he hath the broad coverlet of general usage to shroud him from blame; he doth at least fancy consolation in undergoing a doom with so many.

But upon many accounts this is a very fallacious and dangerous ground of practice.

For multitudes are no good authors of opinion^b, or guides of practice.

Wise men have ever been apt to suspect that to be bad, which is most commonly admired and affected^c.

Nothing is more vulgarly noted, than the injudiciousness, the blindness, the levity, temerity, and giddiness of the vulgar; temper, inclination, appetite, interest, and the like perverting biases, have most sway on them; any specious appearance, any slight motive, any light rumour doth serve to persuade them any thing, to drive them any whither.

All ages have deplored the paucity of wise and

^a

Illos

Defendit numerus.—

Juv. Sat. ii. 45.

^b Vid. M. Ant. ix. 18; xi. 3, 4.

^c Argumentum pessimi, turba est.—Sen. de Vit. Beat. [cap. ii.]

good men; the genuine disciples of our Lord, and sons of wisdom, have ever been *pusillus grex*, a small flock; our Lord hath told us, that, *Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.*

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Luke xii.
32.
Matt. vii.
13.
Luke xiii.
24.
Rom. ix.
27.
Isai. x. 22.

Wherefore popular use is no good argument of truth or right; nor can yield any warrant or any colour for infringing God's law: no *plebiscitum* can be of force against it.

God never did allow the people to exempt themselves or us from their loyalty, or obedience to his laws; they are universally obligatory; *He hath commanded all men to repent*; he hath threatened that otherwise, *All shall perish*; and that, *Tribulation and anguish shall be upon every soul of man that doeth evil.*

Acts xvii.
30.
Luke xiii.
3.
Rom. ii. 9.

He by express prohibitions hath obviated all such pretences and pleas; *Thou shalt not*, saith he, *follow a multitude to do evil*; and, *Say ye not a confederacy—neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid* (fear not to dissent and discost from the way of this people). And, *If sinners entice thee, (how many soever they be, though it be a Sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers,) consent thou not.*

Exod.
xxiii. 2.
Isai. viii. 11,
12.
1 John ii.
15.
Isai. viii. 10.
Prov. i. 10.
Isai. i. 4.

Indeed, if we consider it, it is so far from excusing sin, that it is an aggravation thereof, that we therein conspire with others, and the more the worse: to oppose God singly is not quite so criminal, as to join with a rout in hostility and rebellion against him; for hereby God's authority is more shaken, and his honour more rudely violated; hereby we do not only sin ourselves, but contribute to the sin of others, encourage them to it, and uphold them in it by our patronage.

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Hereby we become accessory to the degeneracy and general apostasy of the age.

Hereby we do join our forces to pull down God's judgments on our country, and by promoting general corruption induce general vengeance.

The multitude of sinners is so far from sheltering any one from wrath, that it surely draweth it upon all; forcing the Almighty not only for the assertion of his own authority, and vindication of his honour, but for the good of the people, and purgation of the world, to pour forth remarkable vengeance.

For example; In the time of Noah did God spare the old world, when *All flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth*, did that stave off God's wrath, or stop the deluge? No, it did grievously provoke him, it did in a manner necessitate him to destroy man from the face of the earth; *Bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.*

Did the number of sinners in Sodom prevent vengeance on them? was it not that which did condemn them to an overthrow so dismal, pulling down fire and brimstone on them?

What was the reason of that woful captivity into which Israel was carried? was it not because *They were all grievous revolters*; and had so generally conspired in wickedness, that the Prophet could say, *Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it?* Was it not this which did wring from God that sentence, *Shall I not visit for these things? shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?*

When the case is such in any community, as it SERM. LVI.
 was in Israel, when God said, *From the sole of the* Isai. i. 6;
foot even to the head there is no soundness in it, then
 judgment is necessary, and it must assuredly follow:
Your country is desolate—then God, his patience i. 7;
 being tired, and his goodness unsupportably abused,
 will cry out, *Ah, I will ease me of my adversaries,* i. 24.
and avenge me of mine enemies.

God as Governor of the world, in discharge of
 his office, for clearing his honour, for assuring his
 majesty, out of regard to public good, for the safety
 and welfare of his subjects, is concerned to chastise
 notorious, scandalous, and infectious sin: he may
 reserve private sins for the final doom, when the i Cor. iv. 5.
 hidden things of darkness shall be brought to
 light, and the counsels of hearts manifested, and all
 things shall receive just reward and recompense;
 but it is expedient to punish public sins publicly:
They who declare their sin as Sodom, with out- Isai. iii. 9.
 rageous impudence, are like to find a punishment
 like that in a common vengeance.

We should therefore in such a case be the more
 careful of our conversation, more shy of sinful com-
 pliance with others, for preventing public calamity;
 for that our single piety and innocence (or the
 goodness of a few) may save our country, together
 with ourselves, from wrath and ruin; seeing it is the
 gracious method of God in regard to a few righteous
 men to spare the rest, to release a nation from de-
 served punishment; for if in Sodom had been found Gen. xviii.
 ten righteous persons, it had escaped that horrible 32.
 destruction; and Israel in Hezekiah's time, (al-
 though in a very great and general corruption of that
 age,) by a few good men did avoid the like doom;

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Isai. i. 9.
Lam. iii.
22.

according to that of the prophet, *Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom.*

The righteousness of one Noah did save the race of mankind from being extinct.

The zeal of one Phinehas did stop that plague which had devoured Israel: *Phinehas, said God himself, the son of Eleazar, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.*

Num. xxv.
II.
Ps. cvi. 30.

If there had been such another public patron of piety, at the time when Israel was so severely punished by deliverance into captivity, it would have obstructed that lamentable event; God himself so testified; for, *I sought, said he, for a man among them, that would make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them:—*

Ezek. xxii.
30, 31.

Jer. v. i.

and, *Run ye to and fro, (said he again,) seek if ye can find a man—in Jerusalem,—and I will pardon it.*

Wherefore, beside regard to our own welfare, a consideration of public good, charity toward the world, a compassion of our country should withhold us from conspiring in common transgressions, or omissions of duty.

Ecclus. xvi.
17.

If we sin with all, we must suffer with all; nor will the having so much company in suffering yield any true comfort to us: *Socios habuisse doloris* (to have companions in sorrow) is in itself a pitiful solace, and an unworthy one, savouring of inhuman malignity; for our fellows will bear no share with

us, or take off any thing from the burden of our pains, which will be equally to them and us extreme. SERM.
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Can it be any considerable satisfaction, that we are sick of an epidemical disease, that sweepeth away multitudes about us and with us?

Is it better for one part, that the whole body is overspread with a noisome leprosy? that its fellow members are tortured with grievous anguish?

Can the sorest pains of our brethren cure the achings of our heart, assuage the pangs of our conscience, or slack the consuming flames beneath?

What advantage can we enjoy from going down to hell in a troop? what ease shall we find there from being encompassed with the doleful groans, the piercing shrieks, and dismal howlings of fellow sufferers in that infernal dungeon?

Alas! will it not rather augment our pains to hear the sore complaints, the fierce accusations, the desperate curses of those, whom our compliance hath engaged, or encouraged, or confirmed and hardened in that wicked practice, which did throw them into that disconsolate case?

8 Another principle (near of kin to the former) is a dislike of singularity and solitude; together with the consequences and imputations usually cleaving thereto.

One would not be a man by himself; to be gazed on, to be hooted at as a kind of prodigy, to be deemed an extravagant, odd, humorous, fantastic person, conceited of his own opinion, addicted to his own way, arrogating to himself a liberty of crossing and condemning or contemning the world;

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therefore he runneth along with the age, complying with its sinful customs and naughty fashions^d.

But this is a vain principle; for, really, to be singular is no fault, to be held so is no disgrace; it is rather in many cases laudable and honourable; and if in any, most reasonably it is in this.

Doth not singularity or paucity increase the price and estimation of every valuable thing? What maketh a jewel but rarity? what but that maketh a diamond more precious than a pebble?

Do not men for singular eminency in any art, skill, faculty, endowment, gain credit and renown? What recommended to posterity the names of Apelles, Praxiteles, Phidias, but excelling in their art beyond the ordinary rate? what gave to Demosthenes and Cicero their esteem, but a singular knack of eloquence? to what did Alexander and Cæsar owe their fame, but to an extraordinary valour? whence got Socrates such a name, but from his singular wisdom? whence Fabricius, Aristides, Cato, but from their singular integrity?

Why then should it be a discouragement or reproach to be singular or extraordinary in the noblest of all faculties, that of living well, in the most excellent of all perfections, that of virtue?

In truth a man is hardly capable of a greater commendation than this, that he is singularly good; that he surpasseth the vulgar level, and mounteth near heaven in the divinest qualities; that no bad example or fashion hath been able to seduce or corrupt him: this should render him to be most highly esteemed, and most dearly cherished, as a

^d *He is grievous unto us even to behold: for his life is not like other men's, his ways are of another fashion.*—Wisd. ii. 15.

choice ornament of the world, as a most useful instrument of good to mankind. SERM.
LVI.

It were desirable that virtue were more common in the world; but surely its being more rare doth render it more admirable, more illustrious, more glorious.

Heroical virtue is therefore such, because so few do attain or can reach it;

Pauci quos æquus amavit
Jupiter^e;

A few, who by special assistance of God's grace, and by extraordinary resolution, do surmount the obstacles which are set against it.

It was well said of St Bernard, *To be good among good men hath safety, but to be such among bad men hath also praise*; (a man will be saved by that, but he should be commended for this;) *that hath as much facility as it hath security, this is of as much worth as difficulty^f.*

Indeed, if we consider the nature of things, or consult the history of times, we shall find, that virtue must be, and ever hath been, liable to this imputation; it is commonly so hard and hazardous to be good in any notable degree, that few will take the pains, or undergo the hardships requisite to attain or exercise it.

Hence the best men (who are such, not according to the blind conjecture of men, but in God's sure esteem) are an elect, and peculiar sort of people, a few choice persons culled out of a great 1 Pet. ii. 9.

^e [Virg. *Æn.* vi. 128.]

^f Et quidem inter bonos bonum esse, salutem habet; inter malos vero, et laudem. Illud tantæ facilitatis est, quantæ et securitatis; hoc tantæ virtutis, quantæ et difficultatis.—Bern. Ep. xxv. [Opp. Tom. i. col. 42 A.]

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lump of those, who either reject Religion, or embrace it only in verbal profession or formal show.

Hence it hath been the observation, and complaint of all times, *Rari quippe boni*^s.

Hence the most renowned men for goodness, and who by God's special care have been recommended to us as patterns thereof, have been very singular in it; and their singularity did much enhance the price of their goodness.

Gen. v. 22. It is said of Enoch, that he walked with God; but it seemeth with small or no company beside; otherwise it would not have been so particularly recorded of him.

2 Pet. ii. 5. Noah was content to be a man by himself, a preacher of righteousness against the vogue, and a practiser thereof against the stream of his whole age; for, *Thee* (said God of him, that is, thee alone) *have I seen righteous before me in this generation*. He was no less singular in his goodness, than in his salvation.

Gen. xii. 1. Abraham had no common qualities, which moved God to pick him out, and separate him from the rest of mankind, (to single him from his kindred and country,) to confer special graces and blessings on him.

2 Pet. ii. 7. *Lot had his righteous soul vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked*, which did enclose him, yet so that he did retain a sound and clear integrity among them.

Job i. 8. Job had this testimony from God, examining Satan concerning him, *Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth*

a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? SERM.
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What was the resolution of Joshua? did he value being sole or singular in his practice? No; for, propounding to his people whether they would choose God or not, he told them that however it were, although all of them should forsake God, he was resolved to stick fast to him, not regarding their practice; *But*, said he, *as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord*: that, indeed, was nobly resolved; it was a resolution worthy of such an hero, to stand alone in so good and wise a choice against his whole nation. It was a resolution suitable to that his behaviour, which he expressed in these words, *My brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the Lord my God*; in regard to which his camerade Caleb, being of the same spirit with him, is called a man of another spirit; different from, and above the mean spirit of his fellows. Josh. xxiv.
15;
xiv. 8.
Numb. xiv.
24.

What was David? was he not a man by himself? was he not like one, of whom the Poet saith,

Egregium sanctumque virum si cerno, bimembri
Hoc monstrum puero, aut * * *
* * * * fetæ comparo mulæ^h.

So he telleth us; *I*, saith he, *am become as it were a monsterⁱ unto many, but my sure trust is in thee*. Ps. lxxi. 7;
cxix. 51.
I Pet. iv. 4.

Did Elias, to shun the imputation of singularity, or in regard to common practice, swerve from his faithful adherence to God's service, although he did passionately resent, and bewail his case? No, for *I have*, said he, *been very jealous for the Lord of hosts*; I Kings
xix. 10.

^h Juv. Sat. XIII. [64.]

ⁱ A wonder.—N. Trans.

SERM. *for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant,*
LVI. *thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets*
with the sword; and I, even I only, am left, and they
seek my life, to take it away.

Lam. iii. What was the case of Jeremy? *I, saith he, was*
14. *a derision to all my people, and their song all the*
Jer. i. 18. *day: yet did he maintain his integrity, and was A*
defenced city, and an iron pillar, and a brazen wall
(murus aheneus) against the whole land; against the
kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, and
against the people of the land.

What was the condition of our Lord? was not
Luke ii. 34. he, *Σημεῖον ἀντιλεγόμενον, A prodigy spoken against*
Heb. xii. 3. *by all; against whom, Both Herod and Pontius*
Acts iv. 27. *Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel*
Is. lxiii. 3. *were gathered together; Who trod the wine-press*
John xii. *alone, and of the people there was none with him;*
37. *who in his life was regarded by few, and at his*
John xvi. *death (when he yielded his great attestation to*
32. *truth and righteousness) was deserted by all?*
Matt. xxvi. 31, 56.

What was the Apostles' condition? were they
Acts xxxviii. not singular men? were not they held a sect, every-
22. *where spoken against, and impugned with all vio-*
2 Cor. iv. 9. *lence of spirit and rage? were not they made a*
Heb. x. 33. *spectacle to the world, to be gazed at, with scorn*
1 Cor. i. 26. *and reproach? did not they (a few, simple, poor,*
weak folk) in doctrine and practice cross and con-
trol the world, confuting, reproving, condemning
the generality of men, of error, of folly, of wicked-
ness?

It can therefore be no just blame or reasonable discouragement to appear singular in the practice of virtue.

Such a singularity is no good argument of fond

conceitedness, of wilful humour, of arrogant pride. SERM.
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For,

Can it be fond conceitedness to follow the dictates of the best reason, to observe the advices of the wisest men in all times, to follow the direction and conduct of infinite wisdom; to embrace that, which in most cases natural light, common sense, and continual experience do approve? is it not wildness to do otherwise, though all should do it?

Can it be wilful humour to hold fast our best interest, our truest comfort, our eternal salvation? is it not rather so, to comply with a perverse generation in running headlong to their own ruin? Matt. xvii.
17.

Can it be pride or arrogance to acknowledge our Maker, to be loyal and dutiful to our heavenly Sovereign, to fear the Almighty God, to submit to his will, to tremble at his word, to be afraid of his judgments, to shun his fierce anger and severe vengeance? Ps. cxix.
120.

Is it a bad ambition to seek that honour and immortal glory which God doth offer, to shun that everlasting shame and contempt which he doth menace?

Is it not rather monstrous presumption and enormous vanity to consort and conspire with rebels against God's law, with despisers of his grace?

In fine, when the most men are foolish and vain, when the world is depraved and dissolute, it is necessary that the best reason should be called humour, and the wisest men should be deemed extravagant; that the best things should be slighted, and the best persons represented with odious characters; but hence to renounce wisdom and goodness is abominably absurd; as if we should therefore put out

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our light, because it is night about us, or in deep winter should put off our clothes among the wild Indians.

9 Of affinity to the foregoing principles is this most plausible apology for smothering our conscience, namely, a prudential apprehension, that we shall not come off well in openly avowing and abetting goodness, so as to do any good or service to it thereby; but shall thereby rather work prejudice and disservice to it.

The age (will such a wise man say) is incorrigibly degenerate; wickedness is not only bold and impudent, but even outrageously insolent; so that to appear strictly good is a kind of scandal, to pretend conscience for our rule of action is to be ridiculous, to patronise duty is to provoke scorn and obloquy, to mention Religion is to prostitute and profane it, to concern God in our doing is to expose his most sacred and venerable name to irrision and foul abuse.

Such is the posture of things, that of all the sects and factions which divide the world, that of Epicurean scorers and mockers is become the most formidable; with disdainful pride insulting and vapouring over the professors of Religion, persecuting all soberness of mind and stanchness of manners with a fierce rage and a kind of satanic zeal.

The state of the world being like to that when the holy Psalmist cried out, *Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph? how long shall they utter and speak hard things, and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?*

Ps. xciv.
3, 4;
lii. 1; x. 3.

In such a case, is it not seasonable to observe

our Lord's advice, not to give that which is holy unto dogs, nor to cast our pearls before swine; (not to expose good doctrine and holy practice to scurrilous and sensual people, who will snarl and bark at it, will scorn and trample on it, will bite and tear you for it?)

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LVI.
Matt. vii. 6.

Is it not then wisdom rather fairly to retreat, withdrawing our virtue into a safe retirement, than by openly contesting for it against overmatching forces to hazard its being baffled and abused, its being trampled on and triumphed over, by scornful pride and malice?

In such a world to oppose impiety, what is it but attempting to stop a torrent, to allay a storm, to gape against an oven, to blow against the wind, to kick against the pricks?

But if this case be rightly weighed, it rather strongly may engage us to an open profession and practice of the strictest virtue, than excuse us from it.

St Paul doth enjoin us *To walk accurately, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, for this reason, because the days are evil; and, That we should be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, shining among them as lights in the world, and holding forth or holding fast, ἐπέχοντες, the word of life.*

Eph. v. 15.

Phil. ii. 15, 16.

And great reason for it; for the worse the world is, the more need there is of good patterns to instruct and guide it, to admonish and excite it to goodness.

If the days are evil, it is high time that we should apply our best endeavours to the mending of them.

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If virtue be so near lost, or so quite gone from among us, it is needful that we should presently seek to recover or to retrieve it^k.

If goodness be so hardly pressed by opposition, then hath every good man the more reason to appear strenuously in its defence, the more are we engaged to hasten with all our might to its relief and succour from irrecoverable oppression.

Every one should labour to raise a bank against that inundation which threateneth to overflow and overwhelm all.

Shall we endure to see the adversary of our welfare to carry all before him without any opposition or obstruction? Shall we suffer iniquity to enjoy a quiet reign, to root and settle itself in its usurpation, to raise itself a title of long occupancy and prescription against goodness?

Is it not then more generous to avow our friendship to virtue, and to abet it in our patronage, when it is under the hatches, and crieth for our aid? is it not vile treachery in such a case to desert it?

Is it not gallant then to resist sin, and check wickedness, when it is so high and rampant?

Who will not be virtuous (or endeavour at least to appear such) when virtue is in fashion and request; when it flourisheth in reputation, when all the world doth countenance and abet it? who will not shun or disown wickedness, when it is commonly odious and despicable? who will not help the Lord against weak adversaries?

Judg.v.23.

But to embrace virtue upon greatest disadvan-

^k Specta juvenis—in ea tempora natus es, quibus firmare animum expediat constantibus exemplis.—Tac. Ann. xvi. [35.]

tages, to disclaim vice in its triumphant prosperity, SERM. LVI.
this is, indeed, brave and masculine.

He is a worthy man, indeed, who can keep the field among so many stout enemies, who can stand upright in a crooked generation; who can despise Deut. xxxii. 5.
the scorn, defy the rage, bear up against the impudence and malignity of vain, base, wretched men, combining to supplant and extirpate goodness.

Nor have we reason in proceeding thus to despair of good success; we need not fear thereby to expose the credit, or endanger the interest of goodness. For,

How can we fail of prospering in the maintenance of God's cause and special concern? Although men may commonly desert him, yet doth he not utterly forsake them, or give over the government of the world; he may let the reins lie a little loose, but he doth not put them out of his hands; his power cannot be abated, his providence can never sleep; though he is so patient in suffering wicked men to provoke him, yet he will not be slack in assisting good men, who take his part, and undertake to maintain his honour; assuredly he will help them, who help him against the mighty.

Judg. v. 23.

In this service, *One will chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight*; one David will knock down never so many Philistines reproaching God's name; one Phinehas will repress the petulancy of a whole nation; one Jeremy shall be *A brazen wall against a whole land*; God will make it good to such an one, *They shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee.* Deut. xxxii. 30. Josh. xxiii. 10. Num. xxv. 3. Jer. xv. 20. i. 19; xx. 11.

One sober man in defence of virtue is able to

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LVI.

James iv.
7.

Jer. xx. 11.

1 Pet. ii. 15;

iii. 16.
Tit. ii. 8.

discomfit all the hectors, the huffing blades, and boisterous ruffians in the world, attacking them with sound discretion and steady resolution: for all their bravery and confidence, they are easily mated; and being like their sire, if you resist them, they will flee from you: a prudent, seasonable, smart check will quash their spurious courage and giddy audacity. Their contempt of goodness is but feigned; they cannot really for their hearts despise it; there is stamped on their souls and consciences such a respect, such an awe thereof, which they cannot quite rase out: wherefore if you briskly represent it to them, and challenge their reverence to it, they cannot but succumb, their own mind and conscience joining to back your reproof; so that if you cannot reclaim them, you shall however repress them; if you cannot correct their vice, you shall yet confound their impudence; *For so, saith St Peter, it is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; and, Having a good conscience, that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your conversation in Christ.*

It is only sneaking, or a timorous pretence to virtue, which they contemn; but they will admire those who stiffly adhere to it, and stoutly maintain it.

We shall therefore expose virtue, not by frankly avowing it, but by faintly slinking from it, when occasion requireth an open acknowledgment and exemplary practice of it.

If the world is so very bad, it will not be worse for our attempt to better it; it will be so much at least better, that one therein hath that worthy purpose.

It was bad, when Noah preached righteousness to it. SERM.
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It was bad, when Elias was so zealous for the Lord of hosts.

It was bad, when Jeremy was derided for declaring God's will and exhorting to repentance.

They were very bad times, when all the Prophets did strive so earnestly to reclaim men from their wickedness; being reproached and persecuted for doing so, but not deterred from doing it: the resentment they had of the badness of the times did not make them abandon the means of their recovery from it.

The whole world did lie in wickedness when the Apostles did undertake the reformation of it. 1 John v.
19.

In fine, if men generally upon such accounts of despairing prudence neglect to own goodness, what must the consequence be? what, but that piety shall be cashiered, that virtue shall be discarded, that conscience shall be quite exploded and exterminated from the world? that consequently an horrible deluge of various mischiefs, a general prevalence of lewdness and luxury, of fraud and violence, of faction and tumult, a violation of all faith and friendship, a dissolution of all order and peace will ensue? Isai. lix. 4.

And what must grow upon this state of things? what but another flood of judgments, and woful vengeance? when God's patience hath been tried to the utmost, and his goodness tired with bearing such a load of abominations, he will be forced to cry out, *Shall I not visit for these things? shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?* Jer. v. 29.
Isai. i. 24;
lix. 17.

10 Another principle of dispensing with

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conscience in public duties and conversation before men, is a kind of perverse wisdom, or subtle craft, affecting the name of discretion¹.

Men see there are divers inconveniences attending the profession of respect to God, and conscience in all their doings; that the world may dislike and disesteem them, that divers persons will hate, malign, reproach, and persecute them for it; that they may chance to be crossed in their designs, and lose profits or preferments thereby; therefore they deem it advisable to decline it in open view, making up the defect by adoring and serving God in private.

Thus they think to salve all, by maintaining a neutrality, and compounding the business, yielding an open conformity to the world, and reserving a secret regard to God; sinning publicly, and privately repenting; retaining their credit, quiet, ease, pleasure, with their conscience and peace of mind; Gal. v. 11. affecting some piety, but avoiding the scandal of it.

They would hold fair with both sides; so that neither the world should persecute them for crossing its humour, nor God punish them for transgressing his will.

They drive a subtle trade, hoping to gain on all hands, both the benefits of the other, and the advantages of this world; to save their soul, and serve their worldly interests together.

This they would believe a point of special Eccles. vii. wisdom, prescribed by Solomon: *Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyself overwise; for why shouldst thou destroy thyself? Be not overmuch* 16, 17.

¹ Stulta calliditas, perverse imitata prudentiam.—Cic. de Off. III. [32.]

wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before the time? SERM.
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But this rooking trick, to hedge thus and save stakes, to play fast and loose, to dodge and shuffle with God, God doth not like, nor will suffer himself to be gulled with it.

He will not be satisfied with such a mongrel, partial, and halting service. 1 Kings
xviii. 21.

He will not allow us to withhold that half of his service (the external, visible part thereof) which is most honourable to him, and most beneficial to our neighbour.

He cannot endure a double heart, or a double face; one looking upward to heaven, another downward to the earth^m. Ps. xii. 2.
James i. 8;
iv. 8.
1 Chron.
xii. 33.
1 Tim. iii. 8.
Deut.
xviii. 13.
Job i. 8.
Ps. xlv. 18;
cxix. 51.

He exacteth from us an integrity of heart and perfection of obedience; that we should love him with our whole heart, that we should be perfect with him, that we should walk uprightly, not deflecting to the right hand or left from our duty. 2 Chron.
xxiv. 2.
Job xxiii.
11.
Matt. vi.
24.
Luke xvi.
13.

He will not endure that we should hold amity or correspondence with his enemies, particularly with the world, the friendship whereof he hath declared inconsistent with his favour; and that it is a spiritual adultery to impart any of our affections to it; according to that of St James; *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? so that whosoever will be a friend of the world becometh, καθίσταται, the enemy of God.* James iv.
4.
1 John ii.
15;
xv. 19;
xvii. 14.

We may shift as well as we can in the world, provided that we hold innocence, and do not

^m Their heart was not whole with him.—Ps. lxxviii. 37. (O. Tr.)

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conspire with it against God, by violation of our duty to him. *Be wise as serpents, innocent as doves.* Matt. x. 16; (*as lambs*, Luke x. 3.)ⁿ

Ps. xxxvii.
38. (O. Tr.)
Phil. ii. 5.

They reproach good men as superstitious; who are afraid of invisible powers; who let go things in hand (present interests and pleasures) for a reversion and hope.

As if God's word were not sufficient security; as if we may not as well rely upon things conspicuous to reason, as those which are obvious to sense.

If Christianity be plainly false, they say well; but if it be true, very absurdly; yea if probable, very imprudently; yea if possible, not wisely.

They charge conscientious men with timorousness, faintheartedness.

It is timorousness or blameable fear to dread things without reason, things nowise formidable, which cannot hurt us; such a timorous man is he, that out of fear of men, (of displeasing them, of suffering by them, of their reproach, &c.) transgresseth his duty.

But to fear God is wisdom, soberness, duty, virtue; it is handsome and honourable, becoming our nature, our condition; the passion of fear was chiefly put in us for this purpose, as its best use.

Is it courage, and not rather madness to provoke, to resist, to challenge, to cope with the Almighty? is it courage to throw one's self down a precipice, to leap into the infernal lake? is it gallantry to dare transgress all reason and sobriety? is it brave to be wild and senseless, &c.?

It is true courage to resist and repel sin assault-

ⁿ Σοφούς μὲν εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἀκεραίους δὲ εἰς τὸ κακόν.—Rom. xvi. 19.

ing a man with whatever advantages; to dare to do well, although vain men deride, and spiteful men hate us for it. SERM.
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It is a kind of martyrdom to be ill used by the world for adhering to his duty; and he hath a share in that, *Blessed are they, who suffer for righteousness.* Matt. v. 10.

In fine, it is a vain prudence to be thus politic with God; whereby we shall lose the whole, or that part which is invaluable, out of presumption to save a small inconsiderable part°.

If this be prudence, *Then*, as St Paul saith, *is the offence of the cross ceased.* Gal. v. 11.

Then our Lord prescribed a foolish condition. Matt. x. 38;

Then were the Apostles very imprudent, who deserted all, and suffered so much for their conscience; being content to secure their spiritual interest, and to obtain the eternal rewards of piety; choosing the better part, which could not be taken from them. xvi. 24.
Phil iii. 8.
Luke x. 42.

What the true wisdom is in such cases St James hath told us: *Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.* James iii. 13.

° Ὁ εὐρών τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ, ἀπολέσει αὐτήν.—Matt. x. 39.

SERMON LVII.

NO RESPECT OF PERSONS WITH GOD.

ROM. II. 11.

For there is no respect of persons with God.

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IT is an ordinary conceit, grounded on a superficial view of things, that Almighty God dispenseth his gifts with great inequality, and dealeth very partially with men; being lavish in his bounty to some, but sparing therein to others; slack and indulgent in calling some to account, but rigorous and severe in judgment toward others.

Which imagination often hath influence upon the affections and the actions of men; so that hence some men do highly presume, others are much discouraged: some are apt to boast themselves special darlings and favourites of Heaven; others are tempted to complain of their being quite deserted, or neglected thereby.

But whoever more carefully will observe things, and weigh them with good consideration, shall find this to be a great mistake; and that in truth God distributeth his favours with very equal measures: he poiseth the scales of justice with a most even hand; so that reasonably no man should be exalted, no man should be dejected in mind, upon account of any considerable difference in God's regard towards him and other persons; the which is clearly

discovered by God, or merely dependeth on his will and providence. SERM.
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The advantages which one man hath above another, being estimated morally, in reference to solid felicity and content, are indeed none; or are not absolutely made by God, but framed by men unto themselves. For

God is indifferently affected toward persons as such, nakedly and privately considered; or as divested of moral conditions, qualifications, and actions: he in his dealing, whether as benefactor or judge, purely considereth the reason and exigency of things, the intrinsic worth of persons, the real merits of each cause; he maketh no arbitrary or groundless discriminations; he neither loveth and favoureth, nor loatheth and discountenanceth any person unaccountably: he doth utterly disclaim partiality, or respect of persons, as a calumnious aspersion on him, and a scandal to his providence.

Such in Holy Scriptures he representeth himself, upon various occasions; declaring his perfect impartiality, and that nothing beside the right and reason of cases doth sway with him; all other considerations being impertinent and insignificant to him. For instance,

It is declared, that he hath no partial respect to nations; for the piety of Job, an Edomite; of Melchisedec, a Canaanite; of Jethro, a Midianite; were very pleasing to him: he favourably did hear the prayers and accept the alms of Cornelius, a Roman soldier; whereupon St Peter made this general reflection: *Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that* Rom. x.
12; iii. 29.

Acts x. 34,
35.

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He is declared not to regard the external profession of true Religion, but real practice according to it: *He rendereth*, saith St Paul, *to every man according to his deeds—tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for*, addeth the Apostle, assigning the reason of this proceeding, *there is no respect of persons with God.*

Gal. v. 6;
vi. 15;
iii. 28.
Col. iii. 11.
Rom. ii. 6,
9, 10, 11;
x. 12; iii.
29.

He is said not to respect faces, or any exterior appearances, however specious in the eye of the world; according to that saying of God to Samuel, at the choice of David before his brethren; *Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature, because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.*

1 Sam. xvi.
7.

It is expressed, that he hath no respect to the outward estate or worldly rank and dignity of men; but that princes and peasants, masters and servants, the honourable or wealthy, and the mean or poor, are of equal consideration with him; *He*, saith Job, *accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor; for they are all the work of his hands; and St Paul biddeth masters to deal fairly with their servants, Knowing*, saith he, *that your master is also in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.*

Job xxxiv.
19.
Wisd. vi. 7.
Eph. vi. 9.
Col. iii.
25; iv. 1.

We are taught, that he doth not regard even the most sacred offices, or more worthy accomplishments of men, in prejudice to the verity of things,

or equity of the case; for hence St Paul maintaineth his resolute behaviour toward those great pillars of Religion, St Peter and St James; *Of those who seemed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person.* SERM.
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Gal. ii. 6.

It is frequently inculcated, that he hath no consideration of any gifts, of sacrifices, of services presented to him with sinister intent, to compound for sin, or excuse from duty, to pervert justice, or palliate wrong; according to that declaration of Moses, *The Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward;* and that charge of king Jehoshaphat to his judges, *Let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take heed, and do it; for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.* And, *Do not think, saith the Hebrew wise man, to corrupt (him) with gifts; for such he will not receive: and trust not to unrighteous sacrifices; for the Lord is judge, and with him is no respect of persons.* Deut. x. 17.
2 Chron. xix. 7.
Ecclus. xxxv. 12.
Isai. i. 3;
lxi. 8; lxvi. 3.
Prov. xv. 8;
xxi. 27.
Amos v. 21, 22.
Jer. vi. 20.
Mic. vi. 7, 8.
Hos. vi. 6.
Rom. ii. 11.
Col. iii. 25.

In fine, it is often generally declared, that God impartially dispenseth recompenses, in just proportion, according to the deeds of men: *He, saith St Paul, that doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons: And if, saith St Peter, ye call upon the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.* 1 Pet. i. 17.

There is nothing more frequently asserted, or more seriously urged in Holy Scripture, than this

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point, that God will judge and deal with men, not according to his absolute, antecedent affections, but according to their own works, or the tenour of their practice, duly scanned and estimated by the rules of justice; so that the really better man will certainly prove the happier, and the worse man shall be the more wretched: *He will reward every man*, saith our Lord, *κατὰ τὴν πράξιν αὐτοῦ*, according to his practice: *Every one*, saith St Paul, *shall receive the things done in his body*, *πρὸς ἃ ἔπραξεν*, suitably (in just proportion) to his works; and, *Each man shall receive τὸν ἰδίον μισθὸν*, his own wages according to his own labour; and then praise (or a due taxation) shall be to every man from God: Behold, saith he in the Revelation, *I come quickly, and my reward is with me*, *ἀποδοῦναι ἑκάστῳ*, to recompense each man *ὡς τὸ ἔργον αὐτοῦ ἔσται*, as his work shall be.

Matt. xvi. 27.
Rom. ii. 6.
Rev. ii. 23;
xx. 12.
2 Cor. v. 10.
1 Cor. iii. 8.
Jer. xvii. 10;
xxxii. 19.
Ps. lxii. 12.
1 Cor. iv. 5.
Rev. xxii. 12.

Wherefore by sacred testimonies it is abundantly manifest, that impartiality is a divine attribute and perfection of God; the which (for our greater satisfaction, and further illustration of the point) may be also evinced by divers arguments, some proving that it must be so, others shewing that it is so; some inferring it *a priori*, from the prime, most avowed attributes of God's nature, and from his relations to men; others arguing it *a posteriori*, from principal instances of God's proceedings and providential dispensations toward men.

Of the first sort are these:

I God is impartial, because he is perfectly wise, and thence doth truly estimate persons and things.

Wisdom doth look evenly, with a free and pure (an indifferent and uncorrupt) eye upon all things;

apprehending and esteeming each as it is in itself; making no distinction where it findeth none; not preferring one thing before another, without ground of difference in them. It doth not fix a valuation on its objects, but acknowledgeth them, and taketh them for such as they are in themselves. SERM.
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Wherefore God cannot have any blind affection or fondness toward any person grounded on no reason, or upon any unaccountable prejudice. No person can seem amiable or odious to him, who is not in himself truly such.

This argument is often used in Scripture; and to assure us of this truth it is there frequently affirmed, that God doth search the hearts, doth try the spirits, doth weigh the actions of men: *The Lord*, 1 Sam. ii. 3. said Hannah, *is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed: All the ways of man*, saith Prov. xvi. Solomon, *are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord* ^{2.} *weigheth the spirits; His eyes*, saith the Psalmist, Ps. xi. 4. *behold, his eyelids try the children of men: and, O Lord of hosts*, saith Jeremiah, *that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart—Thine* Jer. xi. 20; ^{xx. 12;} *eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men,* xxxii. 19. *to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings: I the Lord* xvii. 10. *search the heart, I try the reins, to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*

2 God cannot be partial, because he is perfectly righteous, just, and holy. This reason adjoined to the former doth make up a complete demonstration: for partiality doth proceed either from blindness of mind, or from perverseness of will; he, therefore, who hath both an exact knowledge of things, and

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a perfect rectitude of will, can nowise be partial; the one enabling him to judge, the other disposing him to affect things as they are and deserve; to esteem and love that which is indeed worthy and lovely; to despise and dislike that which is despicable and odious; to have no opinion or affection toward a person, abstracted from all qualifications; such an one being no special object of a wise and just either esteem or contempt, love or hatred.

As these causes are always inseparably connected, (for what is justness, but a disposition of will to follow, without deflection, the dictates of wisdom?) so the effect must necessarily follow; according to numberless testimonies in Scripture, importing, that,

Ps. xi. 7;
vii. 11;
xxxiii. 5;
xlv. 7;
cxlvi. 8;
xi. 5;
v. 5;
xxxiv. 15,
16.

The righteous Lord loveth righteousness; but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth: The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous—but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

3 God is impartial, because he is infinitely great and potent; whence all creatures are in the same degree inferior, at the same distance remote from him; all are equally at his discretion and disposal; he hath no need of any: what therefore should incline him to regard one before another, excepting only goodness, wherein he delighteth? So the Wise

Wisd. vi. 7.

Man discourseth, *He that is Lord of all shall fear no man's person, neither shall he stand in awe of any man's greatness; for he hath made the small and great, and careth for all alike.* So Moses did

Deut. x. 17.

imply, *The Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons.*

Exod.
xxxiv. 6, 7.

4 God is impartial, because he is immensely

good and benign; both intensively in the degree, and extensively as to the objects of his goodness; so that he favoureth all equally, because all thoroughly, so far as may well be according to their condition and capacity; whence if there be any difference or defect, the ground thereof is not in his nature or will, but in the different qualifications of creatures.

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Numb.xiv.
18.

Ps. lxxxvi.
5, 15;
ciii. 8;
cxlv. 8;

There is a double goodness or love of God; one absolute, preceding all regard to personal qualities or deeds; the other conditionate, and consequent on special regards: in both these God is impartial; for the first is general and unconfined, according to that of the Psalmist, *The Lord is good to all, and his mercies are over all his works*; and those sayings in the Gospel, *He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil: He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good; and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust*. The second is grounded on special reasons of the case, and adapted to the rules of justice demanding it; according whereto, *The Lord is rich (in mercy) toward all that call upon him. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him, and preserveth all them that love him*.

cxlv. 9, 16.

Luke vi.

35.
Matt.v. 45.

Rom.x. 12.

Ps. xxxiv.

15;

cxlv. 18,

19, 20;

xxxiv. 9;

xxxiii. 18.

In the first there is no difference; in the second the difference is made by ourselves, being founded in our voluntary demeanour.

5 God is impartial toward all persons, because he hath the same (natural and original) relations toward all.

1 He is the Maker and Father of all; according to that of the Prophet, *Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us?* and that of the Apostle, there is *One God and Father of all*,

Mal. ii. 10.

Ephes. iv.
6.

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who is above all, and through all, and in you all:
he therefore hath the same parental kindness toward all, the same tenderness for the good of each; he is not capable of that imperfection, which is observable in some parents, to be fond and indulgent to some children above others; but in his affection, *The rich and poor, as the Wise Man saith, do meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all.*

Prov. xxii.
2.

Job xxxiv.
19;

Hence Job did collect, that *God accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor; for, saith he, they are all the work of his hands.*

xxxi. 13,
14;

xxxi. 15.

Hence the same holy man did infer, that he was obliged to deal fairly with his own servants, for that God in judgment would consider their case no less than his, upon this account, for, *Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?*

Hence the Wise Man, who imitated Solomon, did argue an equality of gracious providence toward all; *He hath made the small and the great, and careth for all alike.*

Wisd. vi. 7.

2 God is the common Lord of all; and therefore is concerned to protect all with the like care, to govern all with the same equity.

Rom. iii.
29;

x. 12.

Hence St Paul gathereth, that God is indifferently willing to shew mercy and dispense blessings to all people; to confer the means of salvation, and to accept pious endeavours, without distinction of Jew or Gentile; *Is he, saith he, the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? And, There is therefore no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.*

Hence the same Apostle doth urge masters to be just and kind to their servants; for that God, as the common Master, hath an equal respect to both; *Knowing that your Master also is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him.*

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Ephes. vi.
9.

3 God is the *Saviour of all*; desiring and designing that *All men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth*; Being willing that no man should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

1 Tim. iv.
10;
ii. 4.

2 Pet. iii. 9.

Wherefore out of philanthropy and love to mankind he sent his Son to be the *Saviour of the world*; To give himself a ransom for all men; To taste death for every man.

Tit. ii. 11.
1 John iv.
14.
Luke ix.
56.

And what greater instance could there be of perfect impartiality?

John iii. 17;
xii. 47.
2 Cor. v.
19.

So by reasons from the principal attributes and relations of God his impartiality may be deduced: the same also may be declared from his proceedings and dealings with men. For,

1 Tim. ii. 6.
Heb. ii. 9.

1 God hath proposed to all men indifferently the same terms and conditions of obtaining his love and favour, of enjoying his bounty and mercy, of obtaining rewards and felicity from him^a.

The same laws and rules of life are prescribed to all persons, as men, and as Christians.

The natural dictates of reason, the precepts of Holy Scripture, the great moral duties of Religion, by observance whereof God's favour is retained, and salvation assured, are of general concern and common obligation to all without exception.

God hath not framed one law, or one Gospel, for princes and great men, another for peasants and

^a Vid. Clem. Alex. Pæd. i. 4. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 103.]

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mean artisans; he hath not chalked out one way toward heaven for the rich, another for the poor to walk in; but all, *High and low, rich and poor, one with another*, are tied to observe the precepts of piety, of charity, of justice, of temperance, sobriety and chastity, of modesty, humility, and patience; none, great or small, can otherwise, than by proceeding in the common road of virtuous practice, arrive to happiness. *He that doeth the will of my Father that is in heaven, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

Matt. vii.
21;

xix. 17;

vii. 13.

Luke xiii.

24.

Ps. xxxiv.

12.

Rev. xxii.

14.

Rom. ii. 7.

If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments: Enter in through the strait gate: Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life: To them, who by patient continuance in well-doing seek glory and honour and immortality, eternal life will be conferred: these are the grand infallible maxims, the fixed irreversible decrees, expressing the general duty and doom of mankind, according to the eternal reason of things, and the declared will of God Almighty, our sovereign Governor and Judge.

John xv.
14.

Whoever it is, that will please God, that will have his love, that will be happy by his grace, must humbly submit to God's will, must faithfully obey God's laws, must carefully walk in God's way; from this course there can be no exemption, no dispensation, no special privilege for any person whatever.

As all men naturally, by indissoluble bands of obligation, are the subjects and servants of God; so God indispensably and inexcusably doth require the same loyalty and fidelity, the same diligence, the same reverence from all.

Great men sometimes may live as if they con-

ceited themselves free from the obligations which bind other men; as if they had not souls (as we poor mortals have) to be saved, or were to be saved in some other way; as if obedience to the divine laws doth not touch them, but only doth belong to the commonalty; as if they had special indulgence to live in pride, luxury, and sloth, might warrantably practise injustice, oppression, revenge; might *cum privilegio* be lewd and lascivious, withhold their debts, take God's name in vain, neglect devotion and the service of God: but in thus doing they much abuse themselves; for they no less than others are obnoxious to guilt and to punishment, for such misdemeanours against the divine laws. In truth, if there be any difference in the case, it is only this; that they, in all equity, ingenuity, and gratitude, are obliged to a more strict, more faithful, more diligent observance of God's laws; they being more indebted to God for his special bounty to them; they having larger talents and advantages committed to their trust, their deportment being of higher consequence, and most influential on the world, they being liable to render an account according to that just rule, *Unto whom much is given, of him much shall be required*; whence their eminency of condition doth not excuse them from common duties, but doth advance their obligation, will aggravate their neglect, will inflame their reckoning, will plunge them deeper into woful punishment; according to that of the Wise Man, *A sharp judgment shall be to them that are in high places; for mercy will soon pardon the meanest, but mighty men shall be mightily tormented.*

Luke xii.
48.

Wisd. vi.
5, 6.

2 All persons have the same means, the same

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aids, the same supports afforded to them, for ability to perform their duty, and attain their happiness.

The word of God, as the light of heaven, doth indifferently shine to all men, for instructing their minds, for directing their practice, for guiding their feet in the way of peace.

Luke i. 79.

The divine grace is ever at hand, ready to assist all those who sincerely and seriously do apply themselves to serve God.

Seasonable comforts are never wanting to support those who need them, and who in their distress seek them from God, *Who healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds*; so that when *The poor man crieth, the Lord heareth him, and saveth him out of his troubles.*

Ps. cxlvii.
3; cxlvi. 7;

xxxiv. 6.

1 Cor. xii.
7.

The universal good Spirit of God (the fountain of light and wisdom, of spiritual power and strength, of consolation and joy) is communicated according to the needs of men, and exigencies of occasion; preventing them by direction to the right way, by reclaiming them from ill courses, by exciting in them good thoughts and good desires; quickening their good resolutions, and assisting in the pursuit of them; enabling them to resist temptations, and to combat with their spiritual adversaries: to such best purposes the Holy Spirit is given to all in needful seasons and measures; especially to those who do earnestly seek it, do faithfully use it, do treat it well.

Luke xi.
13.

3 God hath provided, and doth propose to all men the same encouragements for obedience, the same punishments for transgression; the which being the same in kind do only differ in degree,

proportionably to the good deeds or bad demerits of persons. SERM.
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God hath appointed one heaven for all pious and virtuous persons, of what nation, of what rank, of what condition soever they are; *He hath prepared those things, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart of man conceived, for all that love him.* For all that have fought the good fight, and kept the faith, and love his appearance, the Lord, the righteous Judge, hath laid up a crown of righteousness. Col. iii. 11.
1 Cor. ii. 9.
2 Tim. iv.
7, 8.

Immortality of life, an unfading crown of glory, a kingdom that cannot be shaken, unspeakable joys, endless bliss, God hath covenanted and promised to all his faithful servants; to all who in his way please to accept and embrace them; *He that willeth, ὁ θέλων, let him take of the water of life freely:* and what greater rewards could there be assigned? What room is there for partiality, where all are capable of the same equally great, because in a manner immense felicity? *Many, saith our Saviour, shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down with Abraham, and with Isaac, and with Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.* Luke xxii.
29.
Rev. xxii.
17.
Matt. viii.
11.
Luke xiii.
29.

Lazarus, the poor beggar, shall rest with the illustrious Moses, and the noble Daniel, with David, and Hezekiah, and Josiah, and all pious princes, in the bosom of Abraham. The poor fishermen, the painful tent-makers, the sorry publicans, shall reign together with Constantine, and Theodosius, and all those good princes, who have faithfully served God and promoted his glory. The rich, well using their wealth, may obtain that

SERM.
LVII.1 Tim. vi.
19.
Luke xii.
33; xvi. 9;
vi. 20.

state, *Treasuring up to themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life*: the poor, contentedly bearing their condition, have a good title thereto, expressed in those words, *Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.*

On the other hand, the same dismal punishments are threatened to all presumptuous, contumacious, and impenitent transgressors of God's law, however dignified or distinguished; be they princes or subjects, noble or base, wealthy or indigent; the same unquenchable fire, the same gnawing worm, the same weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth; the same utter darkness; the same burning lake of brimstone; the same extreme disconsolate anguish is reserved for them all: *Depart from me; Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire*, will be the doom pronounced on all the workers of iniquity; *Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, will be upon every soul that doeth evil.*

Matt. vii.
23; xxv.
41.
Luke xiii.
27.
Rom. ii. 8,
9.Luke xvi.
19, 23.
James v. 1.
Luke vi.
24.
Isai. xxx.
33.
Wisd. vi.
6.

No regard will be had to the quality of men in this world; for the rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day, was not excused from hell and torment: there is a *Tophet ordained of old, even for kings; Mighty men shall be mightily tormented*, if they have mightily sinned.

Even present encouragements of virtue in this life, the joys and comforts of God's holy Spirit, the sweet illapses of spiritual consolation in devotion, the peace of God, and delicious sense of his love, the cheerful satisfaction of a good conscience, the joy in believing God's truth, and hoping for accom-

plishment of his promises, the delight in obeying God's commandments, the blessing of God upon good undertakings, and happy success therein, the co-operation of all things for good to them who love God, the supply of all wants, and satisfaction of all desires, the experimental assurance of God's constant protection and gracious providence over those who fear him and trust in him, (according to numberless declarations and promises in holy scripture,) are indifferently dispensed to all, who shall use the means to attain them, in way of conscientious practice.

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Ps. xxxvii.
4, 5; i. 3.
Rom. viii.
28.
Ps. cxlv.
19; xxxvii.
4; xxxiv.
10.

As correspondently the temporal discouragements from sin (crosses, disappointments, vexations, miseries) are without exception allotted to all transgressors of God's law, according to many denunciations therein.

Ps. xi. 6;
lxxiii. 19;
xxxii. 10.
Isai. xlviii.
22; lvii. 20;
liv. 17.

4 The impartiality of God doth appear from his universal providence, carefully watching over all and every person, dispensing good things to each, according to his need, without distinction^p.

Is any man in extreme want? his liberal hand presently doth reach forth a supply; for, *He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness; He openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing.*

Ps. cvii. 9.
Ps. cxlv.
16.

Is any man in distress? the Lord is ready to afford relief; according to that repeated burden of the 107th Psalm: *Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses.*

Ps. cvii. 6,
13, 19, 28;
xxxiv. 6;
cxlvi. 7;
cxlvii. 6;
ciii. 8;
cvi. 8, 44;
lxxviii. 38.

^p O tu bone omnipotens, qui sic curas unumquemque nostrum tanquam solum cures, et sic omnes tanquam singulos.—Aug. Conf. [III. 11. Opp. Tom. I. col. 95 F.]

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Is any man engaged in sin and guilt? he is patient and longsuffering; not pouring forth his anger, not withholding his mercies; letting his sun arise and his showers descend upon the most unworthy and ungrateful: this he doth so generally, that commonly by apparent events it is not easily discernible to whom God beareth special favour; according to that observation of the Preacher, *No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them; all things coming alike to all.* How then can any man complain of partiality in him, who exerciseth so unconfined bounty, clemency, and patience?

Ps. cxlvi.
9;
cxlvii. 14;
ix. 9;
xxxiv. 18.
Isai. xxv. 4.

If there be any considerable difference, it is only this, that God hath a peculiar care of the poor, the afflicted, the oppressed, the helpless and desolate, who do most need (and thence are most induced to seek) his succour and comfort; being also commonly better qualified to receive them; as is frequently declared in Scripture.

It is true, that God hath his particular friends, his favourites, his privadoes, whom he doth specially regard and countenance; upon whom he conferreth extraordinary boons and graces; namely, those who do love, who do fear, who do trust in, who do honour him, who do obey him; concerning whom it is said, *We know that all things work together for good to them that love God: and, The Lord preserveth all those that love him: There is no want to them that fear him: He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry, and will save them: The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants, and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate: Them that honour me, I will honour: The Lord*

Rom. viii.
28.
Ps. cxlv.
20;
xxxi. 23;
xxxiv. 9;
cxlv. 19.
Ps. xxxiv.
22.
1 Sam. ii.
30.
Ps. cxlvi.
8; xxxiv.
15.

loveth the righteous: The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry: Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. SERM.
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John xv.
14.

But evidently there is no partiality in this; for he doth not favour them irrespectively as persons, but as in justice specially qualified for favour; friendship, dutifulness, reverence toward him, being the highest virtues, and arguing a mind endued with dispositions (with equity, with ingenuity, with gratitude, with sober wisdom, with love of truth and goodness) which demand a correspondence of love and respect from God himself. And as we do not hold a man partial, who beareth a special affection and regard to those who express good-will, who deal kindly and fairly with them, who serve them faithfully, and pay them due respect; so neither is God partial, if he doth specially bless good men upon the like accounts.

Especially considering, that God doth not so favour mere pretenders, who profess to love and honour him, but do not love true goodness; fond, superstitious, hypocritical people, who call, *Lord, Lord*, but practise iniquity; who think to please him by affected services; who court and flatter him with their lips; who would bribe him with their gifts and sacrifices. Matt. vii.
22.
Luke vi.
46.
Tit. i. 16.
Matt. xv.
9.
Col. ii. 22.
Matt. xv.
8.

5 All Christians, without distinction, have the same illustrious relations and honourable privileges, the most great and glorious that can be imagined.

Of what greater honour is a man capable, than to be adopted into the blood royal of heaven, to be called to be one of the sons of God? *Ye are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. God sent* Col. iii.
11.
1 Cor. xii.
13.

SERM. LVII. *forth his Son, born of a woman, that he might redeem us—and that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

Gal. iii. 26, 28; iv. 4, 5. Rom. viii. 14. 1 John iii. 1. *Ἰδετε ποταπὴν ἀγάπην, Behold, saith St John, what love the Father hath given us, that we should be called the sons of God. This is a privilege which God hath given, which Christ hath purchased for us all: and Whosoever received him, he gave them ἐξουσίαν ταύτην, (this power, this privilege, this advantage,) that they should become the sons of God.*

John i. 12. Gal. iv. 5, 6. *To what higher dignity can any one pretend, than to be heir of a kingdom by the most infallible assurance that can be; by covenant, by promise of God? Such are all good Christians, God's children; for, If sons, then heirs, saith the Apostle, heirs of God, coheirs with Christ: heirs of God's kingdom; for, Hearken, my beloved brethren, saith St James; hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him? Inherit the kingdom prepared for you. Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me.*

To what higher pitch can the most ambitious soul aspire, than to be a king?

Rev. i. 6, 9; v. 10. 2 Tim. iv. 18. 2 Pet. i. 11. Heb. xii. 28. *Such, St John saith, that our Lord hath constituted every good Christian; partakers, not of a carnal, an earthly, a temporal kingdom, (which is unstable, is subject to various chances and crosses, cannot endure long, or last any considerable time,) but of a spiritual, a celestial, an eternal kingdom, which cannot be shaken; which hath continual rest, peace, joy.*

We are by God called unto his kingdom and glory,—translated into the kingdom of his own dear Son.

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I Thess.
ii. 12.
Col. i. 13.

To be the brethren of Christ; who is the sovereign Lord of glory, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Is it not a considerable honour to be the friends of our Lord? so is every poor soul, which hath the conscience to serve him faithfully; for, *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*

John xv.
14.

All are citizens, free denizens of the heavenly commonwealth; συμπολίται τῶν ἁγίων——.

Phil. iii.

20.

Heb. xiii.

6 All men are liable to the same judgment, at the same tribunal, before that one impartial, inflexible Judge, who cannot be corrupted with gifts, or dazzled with shows, or moved by any sinister regards.

20; xii. 22.

Eph. ii. 19.

Deut. x. 7.

Col. iii. 25.

All persons must stand before that bar upon equal ground; without any advantage; according to that representation of St John; *I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened—and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

Apoc. xx.
12.

The greatest monarchs, the mightiest potentates, the most redoubtable warriors, and successful conquerors, *The men, who made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms, that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; who affected to ascend into heaven, and to exalt their thrones above the stars of God, to ascend above the heights of the clouds, and to be like the Most High.*

Isai. xiv.

16, 17, 13,

14.

There shall they stand bare and divested of all their phantastry; their splendid pomp, their numerous retinue, their guards, their parasites.

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No consideration there will be had of their windy titles, of their gay attire, and glittering pomp.

No respect will be had to the dread of their name, to the fame of their prowess; to that spurious glory, for which they unsettled mankind, and overturned the world; their actions will be strictly scanned according to the rules of God's law and common equity.

They will be put to answer for all the violences and outrages, for all the spoils and rapines, for all the blood and slaughters, for all the ruins, devastations, and desolations, their cruel ambition hath caused; for all the sins they have committed, and all the mischiefs they have done.

They who now have so many flatterers and adorers, will not then find one advocate to plead for them.

Thus it may appear that God is impartial.

But there are divers obvious exceptions against this doctrine. As,

Obj. 1 Is it not apparent, that the gifts of God are distributed with great inequality?

Doth not one swim in wealth and plenty, while another coucheth under the burden of extreme want and penury?

Are not some perched aloft in high dignity, while others crawl upon the ground, and grovel in despicable meanness?

Luke xvi.
19, 20.

Are not some clothed with purple and fine linen, and fare deliciously every day; while others scarce find rags to cover them, and lie at the door begging for relief?

Do not some thrive and prosper in their affairs,

while others are disappointed and crossed in their undertakings? SERM.
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Was it not truly observed of some persons, (and those least deserving good fortune,) *They are enclosed in their own fat—Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish?* Ps. xvii.
10; lxxiii.
7.
Job xxi. 7;
xii. 6.

And whence doth this difference come, but from God's hand? *Who, as the Apostle asketh, maketh thee to differ from another, but God, the disposer of all things?* Jer. xii. 1.
Hab. i. 16.
1 Cor. iv. 7.

To this exception I answer:

1 That temporal things are so inconsiderable, that they scarce deserve to come into the balance, or to be computed^a; for they have but the same proportion to spiritual things, as time hath to eternity; or a finite to an infinite; which is none at all. Rom. viii.
18.
2 Cor. iv.
17.

What partiality therefore is there, if God in mercy and patience bestow on bad men a farthing in the temporal consolations of this life, (if the universal Father give a small portion in this life to untoward children,) while he reserveth infinite millions for his obedient children? Luke vi.
24; xvi. 25.
Ps. xvii.
14.

2 The goods of fortune commonly are dispensed not by a special hand of God, but according to the general course of providence: and what partiality is he guilty of, who scattereth money into a crowd of poor people; although in scrambling some get more than other; and often the worst (being most bold and fierce) do get most?

3 Indeed the receiving those gifts is no sign of God's special regard; as the Preacher well observed; *No man knoweth either love or hatred by* Eccles. ix.
1, 2.

^a Λογίζομαι γὰρ ὅτι οὐκ ἄξια.—Rom. viii. 18.

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all that is before them. All things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.

4 God, as St Austin saith, purposely doth sparingly deal these things to good men, and freely bestoweth them on bad men, to shew how little we ought to value them; how much inferior they are to spiritual goods. For surely he would give the best things to his friends, and the worst to his enemies.

5 Even temporal gifts are dispensed with a very even hand; for if, barring injudicious fancy and vulgar opinion, we rightly prize things, we compare the conveniences and inconveniences of each state, it will be hard to judge which hath the advantage.

Wealth hath more advantages for pleasure; but it hath also more cares, more fears, more crosses, more dangers, more troubles, more temptations.

It hath more plenty; but withal it hath less safety, less ease, less liberty, less quiet, less real enjoyment.

Set the distraction of the rich man's mind against the toil of the poorest man's body; the nauseous surfeits of one against the griping hunger of the other.

That which really doth constitute a state happy, content, may be common to both, or wanting to either, as the person is disposed.

6 The goods of fortune are not purely gifts, but talents deposited in trust for God's service, for which a proportionable return is expected; so that he that hath less of them hath a less burden to bear, and an easier account to render.

7 Many gifts are not dispensed with personal

regard, but for public good; and therefore all have an interest in them. SERM.
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The wealth, the power, the reputation, the prosperity of a prince, of a nobleman, of a gentleman, are not his, but his neighbour's; for governing, for protecting, for encouraging, for assisting whom, they are conferred: the world not being able to subsist in order and peace without subordinate ranks, and without answerable means to maintain them.

Obj. 2 It is apparent, that God dispenseth his grace, the light of knowledge, and means of salvation, very unequally; some nations living in the clear sunshine of the Gospel, while others sit in darkness and the shadow of death; whole nations being detained in barbarous and brutish ignorance. Luke i. 79.
Matt. iv.
16.
Eph. iv. 18;
ii. 1.
Tit. iii. 3.
1 Pet. iv.
3.

To answer this exception fully would require much discourse; it being a dark and difficult point: but briefly we may say,

1 That God dispenseth measures of grace according to a just, yet inscrutable wisdom, knowing what use will be made thereof, and what fruit men will bear. It may therefore be a favour not to dispense light to them, who are not prepared to embrace and improve it well.

2 No man can tell what God doth in preparation, and what obstructions are made by men to his grace.

3 As lower means of grace are conferred, so proportionably less returns are expected.

4 How hard soever it may be to descry the reason of God's proceedings in this case, yet assuredly it is just; and our ignorance of it should not prejudice the belief of those general truths, which are so plainly declared, concerning

SERM. LVII. the universal benignity and impartial equity of God.

Obj. 3 Is it not in Holy Scripture sometimes asserted, that God doth act arbitrarily and absolutely; dispensing his bounty and mercy without regard to any quality in men, or deed committed by them, either in whole or in proportion—God saith, *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy—and, Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?*

Rom. ix.
15.
Matt. xx.
15.

Is not a plain instance of this dealing alleged by St Paul concerning Jacob and Esau, that before the children were born, or had done either good or evil, God said, *The elder shall serve the younger*; and in regard thereto, in the Prophet, *Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*

Rom. ix.
11, 12, 13.

Mal. i. 2, 3.

We answer briefly, that

Rom. xi.
33.

Such expressions do import, not that God acteth absolutely in the thing itself, but *quoad nos*; not that he acteth without reason, but upon reasons (transcending our capacity, or our means to know it) incomprehensible or undiscernible to us; not that he can give no account, but is not obliged to render any to us; that the methods of his providence commonly are inscrutable; that his proceedings are not subject to our examination and censure; that his acting doth sufficiently authorize and justify itself; that it is high presumption and arrogance for us to scan, sift, or contest, or cavil at the equity or wisdom of God's acting.

Rom. ix.
20.

That God doth not act according to necessity, but is free in dispensing his mercy, and applying it to any person, so that they have nothing to challenge upon account of their own deserts or works; but must refer all to his mere bounty.

However, there can be nothing in these mysteries of predestination and providence, which really doth subvert an assertion so often clearly expressed, and so well grounded in reason, or the consideration of God's nature, attributes, ordinary way of acting, &c.

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Whatever expressions are repugnant thereto in sound, whatever instances (depending on occult causes) in appearance do cross it; it yet must stand, that God is impartially merciful, benign, just, &c.

Obj. 4 Had not Jeremy, St John Baptist, St Paul, absolute favours and graces conferred on them, who were sanctified, and separated from the womb to be prophets and apostles?

Isai. xlix.
I, 5.
Jer. i. 5.
Luke i. 15.
Gal. i. 15.
Jer. i. 10.
Luke i. 16.
Acts ix. 15;
xxvi. 16.

Resp. These favours were in design not so much particular and personal, as general and public; those persons being raised up by God upon occasions as needful instruments (elect vessels) of his providence, to instruct men, and to reduce them to God; so that God, in raising up such extraordinary persons, did express his common goodness to mankind.

The like may be said of that special favour, which was vouchsafed to the holy Virgin, who was *κεχαριτωμένη*^r, and *Blessed among women*, for the general good of mankind.

Luke i. 28.

The consideration of this point is very useful, and may dispose us to many sorts of good practice.

I No man should presume upon God's dealing with him more favourably than with others, as if he were a darling or favourite; that God will indulge him in the commission of any thing prohibited, or in omission of any duty.

^r Χαίρε, κεχαριτωμένη.—Luke i. 28.

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xxiii. 21.

No man should indulge himself in any thing, upon a conceit that God will indulge him, or oversee his errors; and that, in this sense, *He seeth not iniquity in Jacob.*

2 No man should be puffed up with conceit that God hath a singular regard to him. For all such conceits are groundless and vain; in them men do miserably delude themselves.

1 John iii.
19, 21.

No man can otherwise found any assurance of God's special love to him, than upon a good conscience; testifying that he doth sincerely love God, and endeavour faithfully to obey his commandments.

3 No man should despair of God's favour; seeing God hath no particular aversion from any; but every person hath the same grounds of hope.

If we can buckle our hearts to observe our duty, we may be sure to be accepted.

Gen. iv. 7.

If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?

4 No man should be discouraged for his condition, or fortune; since in allotting it to him God had no disfavour, nor did intend him ill.

God hath no less regard to him, than to persons of the most high, wealthy, prosperous state.

5 No man should repine, murmur, or complain of God's dealing, as if he were unkindly used, more than others: for there is no such thing. God dealeth alike kindly with all.

6 No man, upon account of his rank, wealth, or worldly advantages, should boast or pride himself; seeing thence he partaketh no more than his meanest and poorest neighbour, of the principal advantage, God's favour.

7 No man, upon such accounts, should despise

his neighbour, *The brother of low degree*^s: for upon these accounts it appeareth, that the Wise Man saith truly, that *He is void of wisdom who despiseth his neighbour*; seeing no man can be despicable, whom God regardeth; seeing God, as Elihu saith, *is mighty, and despiseth not any*; seeing the meanest person standeth on equal terms with the greatest in the eye of God.

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James i. 9.
Prov. xi.
12; xiv. 21.

Job xxxvi.

James ii. 6.

8 Great men should not take themselves for another sort of creatures^t, or another race of men than their poor neighbours; that the world is theirs, and all things are for them; that they may do what they please; that they are exempted from laws, which oblige others; for in moral and spiritual accounts they are upon a level with others.

They are but fellow-subjects and fellow-servants with others; all accountable to the same Master.

9 Superiors hence should be moved to deal fairly, gently, and courteously with inferiors; seeing these are their fellow-servants, equally considerable as themselves with the great Master of the family.

This is the use, to which St Paul applieth the consideration:

Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye have a Master in heaven—Ye masters, do the same things unto them, (that is, be conscientiously good to them, as they are faithful to you,) *forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with him.*

Col. iv. 1.

Eph. vi.

Col. iii. 25.

10 This consideration should preserve us from

^s 'Ο ταπεινός.—James i. 9.

^t Quorum fatis cœlum omne vacavit.—

Lucan. vii. [206.]

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superstition, or thinking to please or satisfy God, win his favour, or appease his displeasure, by uncouth ways, which he hath not prescribed to all men; to corrupt him by our sacrifices and oblations; our flatteries, glozings, colloquings with him; so that he will indulge us in any bad thing, or excuse us from our true duty, in regard to those affected services.

Col. ii.
Mic. vi. 7,
8.

We do herein but abuse ourselves; for he will not approve or accept us upon any other account, than of discharging our duty, being truly righteous and good.

11 It is matter of comfort and satisfaction to a man, who is conscious of his sincerity, that (whatever his condition and circumstances be) God will have a fair regard thereto, and will not reject him.

Job xxxi.
4, 6.

James ii.

1, 9.

Prov.

xxviii. 21.

Matt. xxii.

16.

Jude 15.

Levit. xix.

15.

Deut. i. 17;

xvi. 19.

Prov. xxiv.

23; xvi. 5;

xxviii. 21.

xxviii.

It was so to Job; *Doth not God see my ways, and count all my steps?—Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know my integrity.*

12 The consideration of this point should keep us from partial respects of men.

Not to admire the state of great men^u, nor to yield them undue deferences, (in prejudice to meaner persons, making greater difference than there is ground for,) not to flatter or humour them in an immoderate measure, or unbeseeming manner.

This is that which St James doth urge in his second chapter, as a very unequal thing.

We should imitate God; we should consider, that our opinions and affections should resemble his.

As in exterior judgment no respect is to be had to the rich above the poor; so neither in the interior

^u Οὐ μέλει σοι περὶ οὐδενός.—Matt. xxii. 16.

Θαυμάζοντες πρόσωπα.—Jude 16.

judgment or esteem of our mind; to which St James seemeth to apply the law; *If ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.* SERM.
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James ii.
9.

13 This should keep us from envying at those who have more worldly advantages.

14 It should keep us from being offended, or scandalized, or perverted into false notions of God, upon occasion of any mysterious points, or hard expressions importing absolute and arbitrary proceedings of God, in predestination or providence. For however they are to be understood, they cannot derogate from the impartial goodness and justice of God.

15 This consideration should engage us readily to pay due respect and reverence to princes, to magistrates, to all our superiors.

For hence we see, that the reason why we are commanded to honour and fear them, is, not their worldly grandeur of wealth or power, (things of small consideration with God;) but it standeth on a more solid ground, their sacred relations to God, as his representatives and officers; who in his name and behalf do administer justice, and protect right and innocence, encourage virtue, maintain order and peace in the world.

Though God doth not favour their persons as rich and mighty; yet he regardeth his own character imprinted on them; he regardeth his honour and interest concerned in their respect; he regardeth the public good of mankind, which they are constituted to promote; he considers them as the ministers of his kingdom, and instruments of conveying his benefits to mankind.

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Whence he giveth salvation to kings; he by his law, and by his providence, doth guard and secure them from violence, from contempt, from disrespect.

Rom. xiv.
4.

In honouring them, we honour the authority of God, and the character of divinity stamped on them; we serve ourselves, for whose sake they are constituted, for whose good they watch.

It may also engage us the more gladly and fully to yield them their due respect, to consider, that their condition is not invidious, or their case better than other men's; seeing they are accountable to God for the advantages of it; seeing that God hath no regard to them upon account of that greatness which dazzleth our eyes; seeing that for all the burdens they sustain, for all the cares they take, for all the pains they endure, for our good and public service, they can receive so inconsiderable a recompense from us.

Finally, it should engage us to be very careful of our ways, and diligent in our obedience; seeing there is no other way possible of pleasing God, of gaining his favour and friendship, of appeasing his displeasure, of standing upright, and coming off well in his judgment; this is St Peter's inference, with which I conclude. *If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.*

1 Pet. i. 17.

SERMON LVIII.

THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION ASSERTED AND EXPLAINED.

I TIM. IV. 10.

*The living God ; who is the Saviour of all men, specially
of those that believe.*

THERE are two points of doctrine here plainly SERM.
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asserted by St Paul, which I shall endeavour
to explain and to apply: one, that God is the Sa-
viour of all men^a; another, that he is peculiarly the
Saviour of the faithful. For the first,

God in many respects may truly be conceived
and called the Saviour of all men; for the word save
doth in a large acception denote the conferring any
kind of good; as implying a removal of need, or
indigence. Whence God is the Saviour of all men,
as the universal preserver and upholder of all things
in their being and natural state, as it is in the
Psalm: *Thou, Lord, savest^b man and beast*: or, as Ps. xxxvi.
6;
the general benefactor, *Who is good to all, and* cxlv. 9.
whose mercies are over all his works; *Who maketh* Matt. v.
45.
his sun to rise upon the good and bad, rains upon
the just and unjust, is kind and benign even to the Luke vi.
35.
ungrateful and evil: or, as the common assistant,

^a Οὗ (Θεοῦ) πολλῶν ὄντων, ἐφ' οἷς θαυμάζεται, οὐδὲν οὕτως, ὡς τὸ
πάντας εὐεργετεῖν, ἰδιώτατον.—Greg. Naz. [Or. xxxii. Opp. Tom.
i. p. 596 E.]

^b Old transl. and the LXX. σώσεις, or σώζεις.

SERM.
LVIII.Ps. ix. 9;
cxlv. 18;
cxlvi. 7,
&c.;cvii. 13,
&c. ;
lxviii. 19,
20.

protector, and deliverer of all men, who in need or distress have recourse unto him for succour and relief, according to what is said in the Psalms; *The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him. They cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses.*

In these kinds of senses, especially respecting natural and temporal good, it is manifest, that *God is the Saviour of all men*. But that he is, in this place, termed such in a higher sense, with regard to mercies and blessings of a more excellent kind, and greater consequence, (to mercies and blessings of a spiritual nature, and relating to the eternal state of men,) may from several considerations appear.

1 For that, according to apostolical use, the words Saviour, Save, Salvation, are wont to bear an evangelical sense, relating to the benefits by our Lord Jesus Christ procured, purchased, and dispensed, concerning the future state of men.

2 For that, questionless, St Paul doth here intend God to be Saviour of the faithful in this higher sense, and consequently he means him in the same sense (although not in the same degree and measure, or not altogether to the same effects and purposes) a Saviour of all men.

1 Tim. ii.
1, 3, 4.

3 Because it is plain, that in other places of Scripture, like and parallel to this, such a sense is designed. As where, in this very Epistle, we are enjoined to pray for all men, for this reason; *For, saith St Paul, this is good and acceptable before God our Saviour, who would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge (or acknowledgment) of the truth; where σωτήρ ἡμῶν, the*

Saviour of us, seems to denote the Saviour of us as men, (that interpretation best suiting with the argument St Paul useth;) however it is expressed, that God is, according to desire or intention, the Saviour of all men, in reference to their spiritual and eternal advantage; as willing that all men should embrace the Gospel; which is further most evidently confirmed by the words immediately following; *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

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1 Tim. ii. 5.

4 Because, according to the tenor of Scripture, and the analogy of Christian doctrine, St Paul's assertion thus interpreted is true, as our subsequent discourse may declare.

5 I might add, that *The living God* in our text may very well be understood and expounded to be our Lord Jesus himself; not only as partaking of the divine nature, but as exhibited in the Gospel, the Word incarnate, who as such may seem commonly by St Paul to be styled, *God our Saviour; God manifested in the flesh; God, that purchased the Church with his own blood; Christ, who is over all, God blessed for evermore.* However it from the premises is sufficiently apparent, that God's being the Saviour of all men doth relate unto our Saviour Jesus his undertakings and performances for the salvation of all men; since God in a sense evangelical is no otherwise said to save, than in concurrence with what Jesus did undertake and perform; than as designing, ordering, accepting, prosecuting, and accomplishing our Lord's performances; Jesus being the conduit through which all evangelical mercies and blessings are from God conveyed and dispensed to mankind. So that God being the

1 Tim. i. 1;
ii. 3.
2 Tim. i.
10.

Tit. ii. 10,
13; iii. 4;
i. 3;
1 Tim. iii.
16.
Acts xx.
28.
Rom. ix.
5.

Eph. i.
3, 6.

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Saviour of mankind, is either directly and immediately, or by equivalence and in consequence, the same with Jesus being the Saviour of all men.

That our Lord Jesus is the Saviour of all men; or that the most signal of his saving performances do in their nature and their design respect all men, as meant for, as conducing and tending to all men's salvation, yea and as in their own nature (supposing men's due and possible concurrence with them) effectually productive of their salvation; that, I say, this ancient catholic point of doctrine (the which we profess to believe, when with the Church we say in the Nicene Creed—*Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven*, the which particularly our Church in its Catechism, in the Ministration of Baptism, and in the Communion, doth most evidently and expressly declare itself to embrace) is very true, many full and clear testimonies of Scripture do shew, many reasons grounded on Scripture do prove; the which we shall first touch, and then further both illustrate and enforce the truth, by declaring upon what accounts, or in what respects, our Lord is the Saviour of all men; as also by an application to practice, declarative of its usefulness and subserviency to the purposes of piety. For immediate testimonies:

I Jesus is called the Saviour of the world; who was sent and came into the world to save the world; whose chief performances were designed and directed to the salvation of the world; *We have heard and known*, said the men of Samaria, *that this is truly the Saviour of the world, the Christ. We have seen and testified*, saith St John, *that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world*, (that

John iv. 42.

I John iv.
14.

world, of which it is said, *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.*) And, *God sent his Son into the world, not to judge (or not to condemn) the world, but that the world by him should be saved,* (that world whereof a great part he in effect would both judge and condemn for unbelief and disobedience, he did come primarily upon intent to save.) And, *The bread which I shall give is, saith he, my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.* And, *Behold,* said the Baptist, *the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.* And, *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their offences,* saith St Paul, *to the world:* which otherwise he expresseth by τὰ πάντα, *By him to reconcile all things unto himself.* And, *He is a propitiation not only for our sins, but for the sins of the whole world,* (the whole world, in contradistinction from all Christians, to whom St John speaketh in that place of his catholic Epistle; that κόσμος ὅλος, of which he saith in that same Epistle, Κόσμος ὅλος ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται, *The whole world lieth in wickedness.*) In all which places, that the world according to its ordinary acception (and as every man would take it at first hearing) doth signify the whole community of mankind, comprehending men of all sorts and qualities, good and bad, believers and infidels, (not in a new, unusual sense, any special restrained world of some persons, particularly regarded or qualified,) will, I suppose, easily appear to him, who shall without prejudice or partiality attend to the common use thereof in Scripture, especially in St John, who most frequently applieth it as to this, so to other cases or matters.

SERM.
LVIII.John i. 10;
iii. 17;
xii. 47;
v. 22;
Acts x. 42;
xvii. 31.
Rom. xiv.
10.
2 Cor. v. 10.
John vi. 51.

John i. 29.

2 Cor. v. 19.

Col. i. 20.

1 John ii.

2.

1 John v.

19.

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2 The object of our Saviour's undertakings and intentions is described by qualities and circumstances agreeing unto all men. All the sons of Adam are by disobedience in a lost condition, (lost in error and sin, lost in guilt and condemnation, lost in trouble and misery;) and, *The Son of man*, saith he himself, *came to save*, τὸ ἀπολωλὸς, *that which was lost*, (or *whatever was lost*.) All men have sinned, saith St Paul, and are fallen short of the glory of God; and, *It is a faithful saying*, saith the same Apostle, and *worthy of all acceptation*, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. God commended his love to us, that we being yet sinners Christ died for us. All men naturally are weak and wicked; are in a state of alienation and enmity toward God: and, *Even when we were without strength*, in due time Christ died for the ungodly: *When we were enemies*, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son: Christ once suffered for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous. All men have souls and lives exposed to misery and ruin: and, *The Son of man*, so he assures us, *came not to destroy*, but to *save the souls* (or *lives*) of men. Those propositions in form, respecting an indefinite object, are according to vulgar use equipollent to those, wherein the object is expressed universally. However,

3 They are interpreted by others, expressed in terms as general and comprehensive as can be; such as these texts contain: *The living God*, who is the *Saviour of all men*, especially of the faithful, (of all men universally, not only of the faithful, though chiefly of them.) God our Saviour would have all men to be saved; He is the mediator of God and

men, who gave himself a ransom for all men; God hath shut up all men under sin, that he might have mercy upon all. The love of Christ constraineth us, judging this, that if one died for all, then are all dead; and he died for all, that they who live may not live to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again. The saving grace of God hath appeared to all men, (or, The grace of God, which is saving to all men, hath appeared, Ἐπεφάνη ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡ σωτήριος πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις.) He tasted death for every man, ὑπὲρ παντός. He is the true light, that enlighteneth every man coming into the world. Which propositions do sufficiently determine the extent of our Saviour's saving performances.

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Rom. xi.
32.

2 Cor. v.
14, 15.

Tit. ii. 11.

Heb. ii. 9.

John i. 9.

2 Pet. ii. 1.

1 Cor. viii.
11.

Rom. xiv.
15.

Heb. x. 29.

4 Further yet, to exclude any limitation or diminution of these so general terms, (at least to exclude any limitation in regard to all the members of the visible Church, which are or have been incorporated therein,) it is expressed, that our Saviour's undertakings did respect even those, who (by their own default) might lose the benefit of them, and who in effect should not be saved. For, of those false teachers who introduced pernicious heresies, it is said, that they denied the Lord who bought them. And St Paul implies, that by scandalous example a weak brother, for whom Christ died, being induced to sin, might be destroyed. And, *Do not, saith he again, by thy eating destroy him, for whom Christ died.* And the Apostle to the Hebrews signifies concerning apostates, that they do trample upon the Son of God, and pollute the blood of Christ, by which they are sanctified.

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The supposition thereof is the ground of duty and aggravation of sin^c.

Thus doth the Holy Scripture in terms very direct and express declare this truth, indeed so clearly and fully, that scarce any other point of Christian doctrine can allege more ample or plain testimony of Scripture for it; whence it is wonderful, that any pretending reverence to Scripture should dare (upon consequences of their own devising) to question it; and many reasons confirming the same may be deduced thence.

1 The impulsive cause, which moved God to design the sending our Lord for to undertake what he did, is expressed to be philanthropy, or love to mankind: *But, saith St Paul, when the kindness and love of God our Saviour unto man, ἡ φιλανθρωπία τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Θεοῦ, appeared—according to his mercy he saved us. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son. God hereby commends his love unto us, that we as yet being sinners, Christ died for us.* It was not a particular fondness of affection, (such whereof no particular ground can be assigned or imagined,) but an universal (infinitely rich and abundant) goodness, mercy, and pity toward this eminent part of his creation, sunk into distress and lamentable wretchedness, which induced God to send his Son for the redemption of mankind.

Tit. iii. 4.

John iii.

16.

Rom. v. 8.

Ephes. ii. 4.

2 God declares himself impartial (most particularly) in this case; that as all men in regard

^c Væ illis, qui auctorem propriæ salutis negaverunt.—Ambr. in Ps. xxxix. [Opp. Tom. i. col. 862 c.]

Gregory Nazianzene saith of Julian, *Διὰ τοῦτο μισήσας Χριστὸν, ὅτι δι' αὐτοῦ σέσωστο.*—[Or. xlii. Opp. Tom. i. p. 750 c.]

to him stand alike related, and are in the same condition, so he proceeds with indifferent affection, and upon the same terms with all. He is equally the Lord and Maker of all men; and all men are equally involved in guilt, and exposed to ruin; upon which grounds St Paul inferreth, that as to God's regard of man's salvation, there is no difference between Jews and Greeks; and by parity of reason there can be none between any other sorts of persons, antecedently to God's merciful intentions: *There is, saith he, no respect of persons with God*, (as to preparing the capacities and means, to propounding the terms and conditions of salvation, for about these he discourses;) for, *Is he*, saith the Apostle, assigning the reason of that assertion, *the God of the Jews only, and not of the Gentiles?* No: *There is no difference*, saith he, of Jew and Greek, for there is the same Lord of all, being rich (rich in mercy and bounty) unto all that call upon him; that is by consequence simply unto all; for St Paul implies, that God therefore provided that all men should have the means of calling upon him imparted to them; for that, *How should they call upon him without faith?* and *how should they believe without preachers?* and *how should there be preachers, if they were not sent?* Whence he infers, (against the sense of those Jews with whom he disputes,) that it was necessary that the Apostles should have a commission to preach unto all. And, *The righteousness of God by the faith of Christ is manifested unto all, and over all that believe; for there is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:* the relation of God is the same to all men, (he is the God and Lord of all;) SERM.
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Rom. ii. 11.

Rom. iii. 29.

Rom. x. 12.

Rom. x. 14, 15.

Rom. iii. 22, 23.

Acts x. 36.

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the state and need of all men are the same; there is therefore no difference, excepting that consequent one, which compliance or noncompliance with the conditions offered unto all doth induce. It is true in this respect, what the Wise Man saith, 'Ο πάντων
 Wisd. vi. 7. δεσπότης ὁμοίως προνοεῖ περὶ πάντων, *He that is Lord of all careth (or provideth) for all alike*; and what Clemens Alexandrinus^d says, as to this particular, *All things lie equally for all from God; so that no man can complain of him*; as partial to some, and deficient to others.

3 We may observe, that the undertakings and performances of our Lord are for nature and extent
 Rom. v. 14. compared with those of Adam, (who was τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος, *A type of him that was to come*;) as Adam, being a representative of mankind, did by his transgression involve all men in guilt, and subject them to condemnation; provoked God's wrath, and drew the effects thereof upon us; brought all men under the slavery of sin, and necessity of death; so was our Lord the proxy of mankind, and by his performances in our behalf did undo for our advantage what the former did to our prejudice; by his entire obedience expiating the common guilt, suspending the fatal sentence, pacifying God's wrath, reducing righteousness, and restoring life to all that would embrace them; so doth St Paul at large (in the 5th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans) propound and prosecute the comparison; closing his discourse
 Rom. v. 18. thus: *Therefore as by the offence of one man judgment came upon all men to condemnation; so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men*

^d Πᾶσι πάντα ἴσα κείται παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ ἐστὶν αὐτὸς ἀμεμφής.—
 Clem. Alex. Strom. vii. [Opp. Tom. ii. p. 840.]

to justification of life. As guilt, wrath, and death forementioned, were the fruits of what Adam did, falling upon all; so pardon, grace, and life, were (in design) the effects of what our Saviour performed relating unto all. Yea, the same comparison St Paul seems to intimate in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, where he saith, that, *If one died for all, then are all men dead*; that is, ^{2 Cor. v. 14.} Christ's dying for all men, implies all men in a state of condemnation and subjection to death; and that inference supposes the performances of the first and second Adam to be in their nature and primary effects co-extended and commensurate. The same St Paul seemeth in express terms to say, *All men have sinned, and are fallen short (or are destitute) of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace (or favour) by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.* (All men are justified, that is, according to God's favourable intention and design.) Yea, the very reason why God permitted sin and death to prevail so universally is intimated to be his design of extending a capacity of righteousness and life unto all; so St Paul tells us: *God hath shut up all men under sin, that he might have mercy upon all.* And particularly, that by virtue of Christ's performances death is abolished, and immortality is conferred upon all men, St Paul most expressly teacheth us; *For, saith he, as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

SERM.
LVIII.Rom. iii.
23, 24.Rom. xi.
32.2 Tim. i. 10.
Rom. vi.
23.1 Cor. xv.
22.

I observe that Prosper^e (an eager disputant

^e Cum itaque rectissime dicatur Salvator pro totius mundi redemptione crucifixus, propter veram naturæ humanæ susceptionem, et propter communem in primo homine omnium perditionem, &c.—Resp. ad Capit. Gall. cap. ix. [Opp. col. 214 c.]

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about points allied to this) several times confesseth, that Christ may be most rightly affirmed to have been crucified for the redemption of the whole world, especially upon two accounts, for his true susception of human nature, and for the common perdition of all men in the first man: we have touched the latter; let us add, that

4 Our Saviour assuming our nature, and partaking of our flesh, *Being made in the likeness of men, and found in fashion as a man*; yea, endued with the passions and infirmities of man's nature, exposed to the tribulations and inconveniences of man's life, did thereby ally himself, and put on a fraternal relation unto all men. *Forasmuch*, saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, *as the children* (the children he means of the same father, or brethren; as the tenor of his discourse makes evident) *are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same*; that is, graciously designing to become a brother to the children of men, he assumed all that was proper to man's nature. God, saith St Paul, *made πᾶν ἔθνος ἀνθρώπων, the whole nation, or race of men, dwelling upon the face of the earth, of one blood*; and of that one blood our Saviour was pleased to take part, entitling us thereby to a consanguinity with him^f; and it was a title of his, which he seemed to affect and delight in, the Son of man. He being such did sanctify our nature, by the closest conjunction thereof to the divine nature, and rendering it more than a temple of the

Phil. ii. 8.
Heb. iv.
15;
ii. 17; v. 2.
Gal. iv. 4.

Heb. ii. 14,
11, 12, 16.

Acts xvii.
26.

Heb. ii. 11;

ii. 7, 16.

^f Ἡ πρόσληψις τῆς σαρκὸς οὐκ ἐδούλου τὸν λόγον φύσει Κύριον ὄντα· ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἐλευθέρωσις ἦν ἡ γινομένη παρὰ τοῦ λόγου πάσης ἀνθρωπότητος, &c.—Athan. con. Arian. Orat. II. [Opp. Tom. I. p. 482 B.]

Divinity; he dignified it, and (as that Apostle SERM. intimateth) advanced it above the angelical nature LVIII.
by an alliance to God himself; he thereby not only became qualified to mediate between God 1 Tim. ii. 5. and man, and capable to transact that great business of man's salvation; but was engaged, and in a manner obliged to do it; for as he was a man, he surely was endued with the best of human affections, universal charity and compassion, which would excite him to promote the welfare of all; as he was a man, he was subject to the common law of humanity, which obliges to endeavour the common benefit of men. As he was a brother in relation, so he could not, he would not be otherwise in affection; he is not to be conceived deficient in performance of the offices suitable to that condition. That good-will which he requires us to bear toward all men indifferently, good and bad, friends and enemies, he questionless did bear himself in the highest degree, and to the utmost extent; the general beneficence, which in his conversation and practice he did express, doth signify how large his desires and intentions were in regard to the welfare of men; so that we may thence well aver with St Ambrose: *Incarnationis Dei mysterium est universæ salutis creaturæ; The mystery of God's incarnation doth respect the salvation of all mankind*, according to his desire and design.

5 We are taught that our Lord hath by his saving performances acquired a rightful propriety in, and a title of dominion over all men living^h; Rev. xvii. 14.

^g De Fide, Lib. v. cap. viii. [Opp. Tom. ii. col. 570 A.]

^h Ἄνθρωπον αὐτὸν ποιήσας ὁ Πατήρ—οὐχ ἀπλῶς δὲ ἐποίησεν ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλ' εἰς τὸ κυριεύσαι πάντων αὐτὸν, καὶ ἀγιάζειν πάντας διὰ τοῦ χρίσματος πεποίηκεν.—Athan. ut supra.

SERM.
LVIII.Acts x. 36.
1 Cor. xi. 3.
Matt.
xxviii. 18;
xi. 27.
John iii.
35;
xiii. 3.
Heb. ii. 8;
i. 2.
John xvii.
2; v. 22.
Phil. ii. 9.
Ps. cx. 1.Rom. xiv.
9.1 Cor. vi.
19, 20.

Heb. ii. 9.

Phil. ii. 8, 9.
Rev. v. 9,
12.

to him is committed the governance and protection of all mankind, as the reward of what he did and suffered for its sake. *He is called the Lord of all men; and the Head of every man.* It is said, that *All things by his Father are given into his hand, and put under his feet; that Power is given him over all flesh; that All authority is given him in heaven and earth; All judgment is committed to him.* Which privileges, rights, dignities, are declared to have been procured by the virtue of his saving performances, and purchased by the price of his blood. *For, to this end, saith St Paul, Christ both died and rose again, and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and living, (or, might exercise lordship over both the dead and living, ἵνα καὶ νεκρῶν καὶ ζώντων κυριεύσῃ:)* and, *We are not our own, (saith he again,) we are bought with a price: and, We see Jesus, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that by the grace of God he might taste death for every man, (or, for the suffering of death, that by God's grace he might taste death for every man, crowned with glory and honour, διὰ τὸ πάθημα τοῦ θανάτου δόξῃ καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφανωμένον, ὅπως χάριτι Θεοῦ ὑπὲρ παντὸς γεύσῃται θανάτου; for there seems to be such a trajection in the words:)* and, *He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; therefore hath God exalted him, and given him a name above every name.* Subjection then and redemption, as they have one ground, so they are implied to have the same extent; as every one must call Christ Lord, so he may call him Saviour; therefore his Lord, because his Saviour. And since Christ hath got an authority over all men, a propriety in every man; since

he hath undertaken to govern and protect the world, he questionless, as a prince of incomparable benignity and clemency, doth seriously intend and desire the best welfare of all his people; it surely cannot be a small benefit to the community of men, that they are his subjects; the objects of his princely care, and of his mercy. Κήδεται τῶν συμ-
πάντων· ὅπερ καὶ καθήκει τῷ κυρίῳ πάντων γενομένῳ·
σωτὴρ γάρ ἐστιν· οὐχὶ τῶν μὲν, τῶν δ' οὐ. *He taketh care of all, which doth become him that is Lord of all; for that he is indifferently the Saviour of all, saith Clemens Alexandrinusⁱ.*

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6 We are commanded to pray, intercede, and give thanks (indifferently) for all men, even for heathens and persecutors; as for the objects of God's benevolent affection; whom *He would have to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of his truth*; expressing our charity in conformity to the unconfined goodness of God. Very good reason (argues St Chrysostom^k) there is why we should pray for all men; for if God doth will the salvation of all men, we, in imitation of him, should will the same; and, if we desire it, we should pray for it. Upon which score the Catholic Church hath constantly and carefully observed this precept; so the learned writer *de Vocatione Gentium* assures us: *Which law of supplication, saith he, the devotion of all priests and of all the faithful people doth so observe, that there is no part of the world, in which such prayers are not solemnized by the Christian*

ⁱ 1 Tim. ii.
1, 4.

ⁱ Strom. vii. [Opp. Tom. ii. p. 832.]

^k Μιμοῦ τὸν Θεόν. εἰ πάντας ἀνθρώπους θέλει σωθῆναι, εἰκότως ὑπὲρ πάντων δεῖ εὐχέσθαι. εἰ πάντας αὐτὸς ἐθέλησε σωθῆναι, θέλει καὶ σύ. εἰ δὲ θέλεις, εὐχου.—Chrys. [in 1 Tim. Orat. vii. Opp. Tom. iv. p. 276.]

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people. *The Church of God doth therefore supplicate, not only for the saints, and the regenerate in Christ, but also for all infidels, and enemies of the cross of Christ; for all idolaters, all persecutors, all Jews, heretics, and schismatics*¹. And Prosper himself: *Setting aside, saith he, that distinction, which the divine knowledge contains within the secret of his justice, it is most sincerely to be believed and professed, that God wills that all men shall be saved; since the Apostle, whose sentence that is, doth most solicitously enjoin that which is in all the Churches most piously observed, that God should be implored for all men*^m. So doth he attest the common practice, and declare the ground thereof.

7 For which practice, and for the confirmation of its ground, (God's serious willingness and desire that men should be saved,) we have the pattern of our Lord himself praying to his Father for the pardon of the worst of men, his murderers; which as it demonstrated his charity toward them, so it argues that he was their Saviour, for that other-

Luke xxiii.
34.

¹ Quam legem supplicationis ita omnium sacerdotum, et omnium fidelium devotio concorditer tenet, ut nulla pars mundi sit, in qua hujusmodi orationes non celebrentur a populis Christianis. Supplicat ergo ubique Ecclesia Dei, non solum pro sanctis et in Christo jam regeneratis, sed etiam pro omnibus infidelibus, et inimicis crucis Christi, pro omnibus idolorum cultoribus, pro omnibus qui Christum in membris suis persequuntur, pro Judæis quorum cæcitati lumen Evangelii non refulget, pro hæreticis et schismaticis, qui ab unitate fidei et caritatis alieni sunt.—[Lib. I. cap. XII. inter Prosp. Opp. col. 864 B, C.]

^m Remota ergo hac discretione, quam divina scientia intra secretum justitiæ suæ continet, sincerissime credendum atque profitendum est, Deum velle, ut omnes homines salvi fiant. Siquidem apostolus, cujus ista sententia est, sollicitissime præcipit, quod in omnibus ecclesiis piissime custoditur, ut Deo pro omnibus hominibus supplicaretur.—Prosp. Resp. ad Obj. Vincent. cap. II. [Opp. col. 231 C.]

wise he knew they could not be in any capacity of having pardon. His praying for them implies the possibility of their receiving forgiveness; and such a possibility doth presuppose a disposition in God to grant it, and consequently a satisfaction provided, such as God requires and accepts, and which shall avail to their benefit, if toward the application thereof they perform their parts.

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8 Indeed it is not easy to conceive, how we can heartily pray for pardon, or for any other blessing, either for ourselves or for others, without supposing Christ to be our Saviour and theirs; without supposing God placable and well affected towards us and them in Christ, upon the account of his performances and sufferings in our and their behalf. We are to offer up all our devotions in the name of Christ, and for his sake must implore all mercies and blessings from God; which how can we do seriously and with faith, if we may reasonably question, whether Christ's merits do respect us, and consequently whether they can be available in our behalf? *I will, saith St Paul, that* ^{1 Tim. ii.} *men should pray in every place, lifting up pure* ^{8.} *hands, without wrath or doubting:* which precept how can any man observe; how can any man pray with calmness and confidence of mind, who is not assured, that Christ is his Saviour, or that God for Christ's sake is disposed to grant his requests? But this point we may be obliged to prosecute somewhat further in the application.

9 Either our Saviour's performances do respect all men, or some men (the far greatest part of men) do stand upon no other terms, than those of the first creation, or rather of the subsequent lapse

- SERM. LVIII. — and condemnation; being subject to an extremely rigorous law, and an infallibly certain guilt, and, consequently, to inevitable punishment; being utterly secluded from all capacity of mercy, and
- Acts v. 31. Luke xxiv. 47. having no place of repentance left unto them, (the place of repentance being a most signal part of Christ's purchase;) so that if any such man should, according to the proportion of his light and ability, perform what is agreeable to God's law, doing what is possible to him (this may be supposed, for what is possible to a man he may do, what is possible is possible) in order to his salvation, he notwithstanding should be incapable of any mercy, favour, or acceptance. But, beside that it is expressly said,
- Rom. xi. 32. that *God did shut up all men under sin, that he might have mercy upon all*; and that we are plainly enough informed, that our Lord did reverse the first fatal sentence, and hath, as the Mediator between God and man, evacuated all former covenants by establishing a new one, (for if any former
- Heb. viii. 7. covenant had been good, there had been no place sought for a new one, as the Apostle to the Hebrews discourseth)—besides these considerations, I say, and beside that such suppositions do not well suit to the nature of God, and do not well consist
- Acts xvii. 30. with the tenor of his providence; God positively and vehemently disclaimeth this rigour of proceeding; he both under Law and Gospel declares himself ready to admit any man's repentance; yea, earnestly invites all men thereto; yea, grievously explains and expostulates with men for not repent-
- Ezek. xviii. xxxiii. 11. Isai. lv. 3, 7. Mic. vii. 8. Rom. ii. 4. ing; yea, not only says it, but swears it by his own life, that he desires any wicked man should do it; he strongly asserts, he earnestly inculcates, he

loudly proclaims to all his readiness to pardon, and his delight in shewing mercy; *The riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering.* He declares that he will exact an account of men, according to proportion, answerable to their willingness to do what they could, and to the improvements of those talents (those measures of light and strength) which they had, or might have had; that whoever is ἐν ἐλαχίστῳ πιστὸς, faithful in using the smallest power, shall be accepted and rewarded. He represents himself impartial in his judgment and acceptance of men's persons and performances; any man, in any nation, his sincere, though imperfect, piety and righteousness being acceptable to him: the final ruin of men is not imputed to any antecedent defect lying in man's state, or God's will, to no obstacle on God's part, nor incapacity on the part of man, but wholly to man's blameable neglect, or wilful abuse of the means conducive to his salvation: no want of mercy in God, or virtue in the passion of our Lord, are to be mentioned or thought of; infidelity (formal or interpretative) and obstinate impenitency, disappointing God's merciful intentions, and frustrating our Lord's saving performances and endeavours, are the sole banes of mankind; *Here, saith our Lord, is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil: and, I speak these things, that ye might be saved; but ye will not come to me, that ye might have life: and, How often have I willed to gather thy children, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but ye would not!* Of the Pharisees and lawyers our Saviour said, that *They defeated the*

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2 Cor. viii.
12.

Matt. xxv.
25.

Luke xix.
17;

xvi. 10.

Acts. x. 34.
1 Pet. i. 17.

John iii.
19;

v. 34, 40.

Matt. xxiii.
37.

Luke vii.
30.

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Isai. xxv. 6.
Matt. xxii. 3, 5, 6;
xiii. 37, 38;
xiii. 20, 22.
John vii. 46.
Matt. xxi. 31;
xv. 22, 24;
ix. 32.
John vii. 31;
v. 44;
xii. 43.
Matt. xi. 31;
x. 15.
Luke xvi. 14.
Matt. xiii. 13;
xxiii. 14.
Acts vii. 51;
xxviii. 26, 27;
xiii. 46.

word of salvation, judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life, (that is, disdaining to embrace the overture of everlasting life made unto them.) And, SERM.
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Despisest thou the riches of God's goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; being ignorant that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? so St Paul expostulates with the incredulous Jew.

And, *How, saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?* So do our Lord and his Apostles state the reason of men's miscarrying in this great affair; signifying all requisite care and provision to be made on God's part for their salvation; and imputing the obstruction solely to their voluntary default of compliance with God in his conduct and management thereof.

Neither are the dealings and declarations of God toward those who lived under the law and prophets impertinent to this purpose; they are applicable upon consideration of parity in reason, or likeness in case. What remonstrances concerning the gentleness, kindness, and equity of his dealings, what exprobatons of their stubbornness and stupidity God did anciently make to Israel under that particular dispensation, (which yet in tendency and in representation may be deemed general,) the same he might now use toward all mankind, under this universal economy, wherein God hath given to his Son, *The heathen for his inheritance and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession;* whereby *All the kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of the Lord, and his Christ;* which hath erected an unconfined kingdom of grace; to which all men in design and of right are subject; in respect to which every nation is in obligation and

Rom. ii. 4.

Heb. ii. 3.

Ps. ii. 8.

Rev. xi.
15.

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Isai. v. 4.

Hos. xiii. 9.

Isai. lxv. 2.

Rom. x. 21.

Jer. vii. 13.

Prov. i. 24,

25, 29.

Isai. lxv.

12;

lxvi. 4.

Ezek. xii. 2.

Jer. vi. 10.

Zech. vii.

11, 12.

to all, that what was in him, he did will to deliver, (or save) *all men*ⁿ: whence he may truly and properly be called the Benefactor and Saviour, even of those, who by their wilful malice or neglect do not obtain salvation^o. For in respect to the same favours, which are exhibited and tendered to them, he is the Saviour of those, who by hearkening to God's call, and complying with God's design; by well using the means vouchsafed, and performing the conditions required, do finally attain salvation.

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If it be said that these transactions do refer only to God's own people, or to those only, unto whom God pleased to dispense especial revelations of truth and overtures of mercy; that we therefore cannot thence infer anything concerning the general extent of God's design, or the virtue of Christ's performances in respect to all mankind; we may to this suggestion rejoin, that by observing the manner of God's proceedings toward them, unto whom he openly declareth his mind and will, we may reasonably collect how he standeth affected toward others, and by what rules, or upon what accounts, he dealeth with them; taking in the analogy of reason, and parity or disparity of the case. As to God's affection, it is the same everywhere, agreeable to that nature, which inclineth him to be good to all, and merciful over all his creatures, as Ps. cxlv. 9. the Psalmist tells us; unto which disposition his providence yields attestation; for, *Οὐκ ἀμάρτυρον ἑαυτὸν ἀφῆκεν, ἀγαθοποιῶν*, *He did not leave himself* Acts xiv. 17.

ⁿ De Parad. cap. viii. [Opp. Tom. i. col. 161 c.]

^o Ἀπολογούμενος μετὰ ἀποδείξεων ὅτι πάντα τὰ εἰς αὐτὸν ἦκοντα ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ τῶν κρινομένων πεποίηκεν.—Bas. in Ps. vii. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 101 E.]

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without testimony, doing good to all, as St Paul tells us; although he doth not dispense his favours in the same method, or discover his meaning by the same light, or call all men to him with the same voice and language.

Neither was mankind ever left destitute of that *Divine grace, which*, as the good writer *de Vocatione Gentium* saith, *never denied itself to any ages, with the same virtue, in different measure, with an unchangeable counsel, and multiform operation*^p. So in one place; and in another, *There was always*, saith he, *dispensed to all men a certain measure of instruction from above, which, although it came from a more occult and sparing grace, did yet suffice to some for remedy, to all for testimony*^q.

Rom. ii.
14, 15;

Comparing the different states of men, we may substitute with St Paul, for the law of revelation engraved upon tables, the law of nature written in men's hearts; for prophetic instructions, the dictates of reason; for audible admonitions and reproofs, secret whispers of grace and checks of conscience; for extraordinary instances of divine power, the ordinary works of the creation, (*By which God's eternal divinity and power are discernible*;) for the special and occasional influences of Providence, the common and continual expressions

i. 19, 20.

Acts xiv.
17.

^p Gratia Dei nullis seculis se negavit, virtute una, quantitate diversa, concilio incommutabili, opere multiformi.—II. 5. [inter Prosp. Opp. col. 892 c.]

^q Adhibita est semper universis hominibus quædam supernæ mensura doctrinæ, quæ etsi parciore occultiorisque gratiæ fuit, sufficit tamen, sicut Dominus judicavit, quibusdam ad remedium, omnibus ad testimonium.—II. 15. [Ibid. col. 901 E.]

Nulli nationi hominum bonitatis suæ dona subtraxit, ut propheticas voces et præcepta legalia convincerentur in elementorum obsequiis ac testimoniis accepisse.—I. 5. [Ibid. col. 851 D.]

of divine beneficence; then allowing for the disparity SERM. LVIII.
 (as to measure of evidence and efficacy) in these things, and as to the rest, the case is the same. If one part hath means more clear and forcible, yet those which are granted to the other are not void of use or virtue; by them all men in all places may seek God, *If haply they may feel after him and find him*; yea may, as St Paul implieth, be Acts xvii. 27.
 able to know God, and induced to serve him; to Rom. i. 18, 20; ii. 15, 26; i. 21;
 thank him, and to glorify him in some measure; in a measure answerable to such light and strength; no more doth God require, for no more will he reckon with them. If their helps be deemed more low and scanty, their duty in proportion is less high, and their account will be more easy. Enough certainly they have to excuse God from misprision of not having provided competently for them, to render them, if they do not well use and improve i. 20.
 it, inexcusable; and what they have is an effect of God's mercy procured and purchased by their Saviour. But of this point we may have occasion afterward to say more; I shall now only add, that this suggestion, well considered, may afford another argument to confirm our doctrine; which is this.

10 If our Lord be the Saviour of all those to whom God's truth is declared, and his mercy offered; or, if he be the Saviour of all the members of the visible church; particularly if he be the Saviour of those, who among these, rejecting the overtures and means of grace, or by disobedience abusing them, shall in the event fail of being saved, then is he the Saviour of all men. But our Lord is the Saviour of those persons; and therefore he is the Saviour of all men. The assumption we

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assayed to shew in the last argument; and many express testimonies of Scripture before mentioned establish it; the common style of Scripture doth imply it, when in the apostolical writings to all the visibly faithful indifferently the relation to Christ as their Saviour is assigned, an interest in all his saving performances is supposed, the title of σωζόμενοι and σεσωσμένοι (with others equivalent, of justified, sanctified, regenerated, quickened, &c.) are attributed. And in our text God is said to be *The Saviour* chiefly πιστῶν, *of the faithful*; which word in its common acception denotes all visible members of the Christian communion. And for its confirmation we adjoin; the Apostles at first, and the Church ever since after them (except some heterodox people of late) have professed readily to confer holy baptism, and therein to dispense remission of sins, together with other evangelical graces and privileges, to every man professing his faith in Christ, and resolution to observe Christ's law, upon this supposition, that Christ is the Saviour of all such persons, and by his salutary passion hath purchased that remission for them; although the dispensers of these graces could not discern what decrees God in his secret providence had passed upon them, or what the event should be as to their final state; yea, although according to the judgment of prudence they could not but conceive, that all such should not be saved, but

Heb. x. 39. that many of them should be of those, *Who* (as the Apostle to the Hebrews speaketh) would *draw*

2 Pet. i. 9. *back unto perdition*, who (as St Peter implies some might and would do) would forget the purgation which they had received of their sins. That in thus

doing the Church proceeds upon a persuasion, that Christ is truly the Saviour of all its visible members, duly admitted and incorporated thereinto, the thing itself plainly signifies; the tenor of its practice makes palpable; the forms of speech used in its holy administrations (of prayers, of sacraments, of exhortations) do suppose or express. For how can each member singly be asserted in holy baptism to be washed from his sins, and sanctified to God, and made regenerate or adopted into the number of God's children, and made partaker of Christ's death? How can thanksgiving in the common name, in most general terms, be offered up for Christ's saving performances? or the holy bread and cup be imparted to each communicant as symbols and pledges of Christ's charity and mercy toward him? How can every Christian be instigated to obedience in gratitude to Christ; and those who transgress Christ's laws, upbraided for their ingratitude toward him; their rejecting, or renouncing, despising, or abusing him and his salvation? How can such things be said and done with any truth or consistency; yea without forgery and mockery, if every baptized Christian hath not an interest in our Lord's performances; if Christ be the Saviour only of an uncertain and unknown part in the Church? This consideration of the Church's practice hath made even the most vehement assertors of St Austin's doctrine, (strained to the highest pitch,) in the more ancient and modest times, fully to acknowledge this position; that Christ is the Redeemer of every member of the visible church, as appears by this remarkable decree of the Council of Valentia in France, (consisting of the bishops Anno 855.

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of three provinces, favourers of Godschalculus's opinions.) *We also do believe it most firmly to be held, that all the multitude of the faithful, being regenerated by water and the Holy Spirit, and hereby truly incorporated into the Church, and according to the apostolical doctrine baptized into the death of Christ, is by his blood washed from their sins^r. Because there could be no true regeneration, unless there were made also a true redemption; since in the sacraments of the Church there is nothing empty, (or vain,) nothing ludificatory; but all thoroughly true, and supported by its own very truth and sincerity. Yet that out of the very company of believers and the redeemed, some are eternally saved, because by God's grace they faithfully abide in their redemption, bearing the Lord's speech in their hearts, *He that perseveres to the end shall be saved*; and that others, because they would not abide in the salvation of the faith which they at first received, and did rather choose to frustrate the grace of redemption by evil doctrine or life, than to keep it, do nowise arrive to the plenitude of salvation, and to the perception of eternal beatitude. It is then a Catholic and true doctrine, that at least Christ is a Saviour of all appearing Christians; and supposing the truth thereof, I say that by consequence he is also the Saviour of all men. For it appeareth thence, that the design of our Saviour's performances did not flow from, or was not grounded*

^r [Item firmissime tenendum credimus, quod omnis multitudo fidelium, ex aqua et Spiritu Sancto regenerata, ac per hoc veraciter Ecclesiae incorporata, et juxta doctrinam Apostolicam in morte Christi baptizata, in ejus sanguine sit a peccatis suis abluta.—Concil. Valent. sub P. Leone IV. cap. v. apud Bin. Concil. Tom. VI. p. 461, c. 2 F.]

upon any special love, or any absolute decree concerning those persons who in event shall be saved; since according to that supposition it extendeth to many others; wherefore it proceeded from God's natural goodness, and common kind affection toward mankind; from the compassion of a gracious Creator toward his miserable creature, whence all men are concerned and interested therein. Why God's merciful intentions were not explicitly declared and propounded to Socrates and Epictetus, as they were to Judas Iscariot and Simon Magus, is another question, which we may afterward in some manner assoil; at present, it suffices to say, that the overture of mercy made to such wretches doth argue God's kind disposition and good intention toward all men; so it did in St Ambrose's^s opinion; who says, that our Lord ought not to pass by the man who should betray him, that all men might take notice, that in the choice even of his traitor he did hold forth a pledge or mark of all men's being to be saved.

But the truth of this doctrine will further appear by the declaration and surveyal of those respects according to which Christ is represented the Saviour of men, as also by considering how useful and conducive to piety this doctrine is, as ministering grounds and obligations, encouragements and motives, to the practice of most considerable duties required from all men. But these things must be reserved to another occasion.

^s Et ideo nec proditum debuit præterire; ut adverterent omnes, quod in electione etiam proditoris sui servandorum omnium insigne prætendit.—Ambr. de Parad. cap. viii. [Opp. Tom. i. col. 161 B.]

SERMON LIX.

THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION ASSERTED AND EXPLAINED.

I TIM. IV. 10.

*The living God; who is the Saviour of all men,
specially of those that believe.*

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THAT our Lord Jesus is the Saviour of all men, we have before from plain testimonies of Holy Scripture, and from some arguments grounded thereon, assayed to shew. The same will be made further apparent by considering the respects according to which he is such; and those we may first consider generally and in the gross, then survey them more particularly and distinctly.

In general we may say, that our Lord is the Saviour of all men, for that he hath rendered all men *salvabiles*, capable of salvation; and *salvandos*, designed to salvation. For that he hath removed all obstacles peremptorily debarring men from access to salvation, and hath procured competent furtherances to their attainment of it. For that he hath rescued mankind out of that dead and desperate condition, wherein it lay involved; being *The bread of God, who hath descended from heaven, that he might give life to the world*, as he saith of himself. For that he hath performed whatever on his part is necessary or fit in order to salvation, antecedently to the acceptance and compliance with

those reasonable conditions, which by God's wisdom are required toward the instating men into a full and immediate right to salvation, or to a complete and actual fruition thereof. He made the way to happiness plain and passable; levelling the insuperable cliffs, and filling up the chasms, and rectifying the obliquities, and smoothing the asperities thereof, as the Prophet foretold; so that all men, who would, might conveniently walk therein. He set the doors of paradise wide open, so that who pleased might enter in; all the bonds and restraints under which men lay, he so far loosed, that any man might be free, who would concur to his own liberty and enlargement^a. All the protection, aid, and encouragement which was needful toward obtaining salvation, he afforded and exhibited to every one that would embrace and make use of them. In respect to which performances he might be justly esteemed and truly called a Saviour, although all men do not in effect become saved. For the estimation and denomination of performances are to be grounded upon their own nature and design, not upon events depending upon the contingent and arbitrary behaviour of men. As he that freely offers a rich boon is no less to be accounted a benefactor and liberal, although his gift be refused, than if it were accepted; as he that opens the prison is to be styled a deliverer, although the captive will not go forth; as he that ministers an effectual remedy, although the patient will not use it, deserves the honour and thanks due to a physician; so is our Lord in regard to what he

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Luke iii. 5;

He iv. 18.

^a Ἡ γῆ ἀντὶ κατάρας εὐλόγηται, ὁ παράδεισος ἡνοίγη, &c.—Athan. in Pass. [?]

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hath performed for men, and offered to them, (being sufficient to prevent their misery, and promote their happiness,) to be worthily deemed, and thankfully acknowledged, their Saviour, although not all men, yea although not one man should receive the designed benefit. Accordingly we may observe, that in the Scripture style, those persons are said to be saved, who are only in a way toward salvation^b, although they do not arrive thither; and the means conducing to salvation are said to save, although their effect may be defeated; σωζόμενοι and σεσωσμένοι are terms applied to all Christians, and Christ is ὁ σώσας, *he that hath saved them*; and faith is said to have saved them, although some of them εἰκὴ ἐπίστευσαν, *have believed in vain*, or to no effect, forsaking and renouncing their faith; and baptism saves them who partake it, although being washed, they return to their wallowing in the mire. And as our Lord is so termed a Saviour in respect to them, who are, by faith and admission into the Church, put into a more near capacity of salvation, as St Paul speaketh: Ἐγγύτερον ἡμῶν ἡ σωτηρία, ἢ ὅτε ἐπιστεύσαμεν, (*Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed*;) so is he in respect of all those, who are in any capacity thereof, although a more remote one.

1 Cor. i. 18.
Acts ii. 47.
Rev. xxi.
24.
Eph. ii. 5.

2 Tim. i. 9.
1 Cor. xv. 2.
Tit. iii. 8.
1 Pet. iii.
21.
2 Pet. ii. 22.

Rom. xiii.
11.

But let us now view more nearly and distinctly the respects in which he is a Saviour of all men, or the particular benefits and advantages conducing to salvation, which by his performances accrue to mankind; for, Πάμπολυ τὴν σωτηρίαν ἀπάσῃ χαρίζεται τῇ ἀνθρωπότητι, *In very many ways he bestoweth*

^b Καταγγέλλουσιν ὁδὸν σωτηρίας.—Acts xvi. 17.

salvation upon all mankind, as Clemens Alexandrinus speaks^c. SERM.
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I Our Lord is the Saviour of all men, as having effected, that Almighty God (who upon great provocations was justly displeased and angry with man, who had averted his face, and withdrawn his favour from mankind, whom our apostasy and rebellion had rendered a stranger and an enemy to us) hath deposed his wrath toward mankind, hath conceived a kind affection to it, doth cast a favourable aspect upon it; being thoroughly reconciled and made a friend thereto by our Saviour's mediation. *This is my beloved Son, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα, in whom I have been well pleased,* was the attestation given from God to our Lord; the meaning whereof in regard to men the holy choir of angels did interpret, when after the gladsome report of his birth, (that *Great joy, which should be to all people,*) they sang, *Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, good-will toward men.* Which St Paul further declareth, when he saith, that *By him God pleased, εὐδόκησε, to reconcile unto himself all things, upon earth, and in heaven:* and when he saith, *That God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their sins:* and, *When we were enemies,* saith he again, *we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son:* When we were enemies, that implies God antecedently to any man's conversion to have been appeased, and become favourably disposed toward all men, or toward those whom St Paul speaketh unto, as men; so the reason of the case doth import, and so the analogy which St Paul immediately after propounds between

^c [Pædag. Lib. i. cap. xi. Opp. Tom. i. p. 155.]

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the results of Adam's transgression and our Saviour's obedience (as to provocation and reconciliation, to condemnation and absolution, to the intents of bringing death and life upon all men) doth enforce. Whence it is, that God declareth himself now to bear an universal good-will to mankind, that he doth earnestly desire the welfare of all men, and is displeased with the ruin of any man; that *He would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth*, because *There is one Mediator between God and man; That he would not have any perish, but that all should come to repentance*; this he affirms, yea (for the confirmation of our faith and our consolation therein) he in the evangelical Prophet swears it, *As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live*. So far toward our salvation is done, God meets us half way; he is reconciled unto us, it remains only that we be reconciled to him; that we hearken to the embassy from him: *Be reconciled to God*.

1 Tim. ii. 4.

2 Pet. iii. 9.

Heb. vi. 16,
18.

Ezek.
xxxiii. 11.

2 Cor. v. 20.

2 Jesus is the Saviour of all men, by satisfying the divine justice, and repairing God's honour in their behalf. The disloyal and ingrateful behaviour of man had so wronged, so endamaged, so dishonoured God, (had so abused the goodness, disparaged the wisdom, slighted the power, impeached and slurred the authority of his Creator, had so prejudiced all the rights and interests of God,) that by the divine wisdom it was thought fit, that he should not be restored into a capacity of mercy and favour, without a signal compensation made, and an exemplary punishment undergone, whereby

the right of God should conspicuously be asserted, his love of goodness and dislike of wickedness should be remarkably demonstrated, and every creature in heaven and earth should be solemnly admonished of its duty^d; of the reverence and obedience it owes to the great Creator, of the heinous guilt and horrible mischief it incurs by offending him. Such a compensation man was nowise able to make, or fit to undergo such a punishment: our Saviour therefore, out of infinite pity and charity, did undertake both^e; by voluntary condescension putting himself into the low and weak state of man; subjecting himself unto that law which man was obliged unto, and suffering the pains which man had deserved. This he was pleased to do in man's behalf, and in our stead; and God was pleased to accept it as so done. His incarnation (or exinanition of himself, as St Paul Phil. ii. 7. calleth it) was an act of that high duty and goodness^f, that it in virtue surpassed all the obedience which all creatures were able to render; that it yielded God more satisfaction and more honour than the joint endeavours of all the world could confer. His, with so intense charity and cheerfulness, fulfilling all righteousness did far more please

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^d Λοιπὸν δὲ οἱ ἄνθρωποι οὐκέτι κατὰ τὰ ἴδια πάθη μένουσιν ἁμαρτωλοὶ καὶ νεκροὶ ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν τοῦ λόγου δύναμιν ἀναστάντες, ἀθάνατοι καὶ ἄφθαρτοι αἰεὶ διαμένουσιν.—Athan. con. Arian. Orat. III. [Opp. Tom. I. p. 583 B.]

^e Τότε γὰρ καὶ θάνατος ἠφάνιζετο, καὶ κατάρα ἐλύετο, καὶ δαίμονες κατησχύνοντο καὶ ἐδειγματίζοντο θριαμβευόμενοι, καὶ τὸ χειρόγραφον τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν τῷ σταυρῷ προσηλοῦτο. &c.—Chrys. in Joh. i. 14. [Opp. Tom. II. p. 602.]

^f Ἡ γὰρ ἔνσαρκος παρουσία τοῦ σωτῆρος θανάτου λύτρον καὶ κτίσεως πάσης σωτηρία γέγονεν.—Athan. ad Adelph. Ep. [Opp. Tom. I. p. 915 B.]

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 Eph. v. 2. vailed the punishment due to the sins of all men. Such a payment was more than served to discharge
 Heb. x. 10; ix. 12. all our debts, (it served to purchase an overplus of
 1 Pet. i. 19. graces and blessings;) so rich a price was more
 than sufficient to ransom all the world from cap-
 tivity; so goodly, so pure, so sweet, so precious a
 sacrifice might worthily expiate and atone all the
 guilts of men^h.

Now if we inquire what our Saviour did re-
 deem, the consideration of what he paid may, as
 St Austin tells, help to inform us; *Quæritis quid
 emerit? Videte quid dederit, et invenite quid emerit*ⁱ.
*Do ye seek, saith he, what he bought? See what he
 gave, and find what he bought.* However, that as
 the value and sufficiency of our Lord's performances,
 so the design and effect thereof did reach so far in
 regard to man; that his charity was no less exten-
 sive than his performance was complete for our
 John i. 29; good, the Holy Scripture teaches us. For, *He is
 the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the
 world*, saith the Baptist: and, *The bread*, saith he,
 vi. 51.

^g Vid. Orat. Cyrill. Alex. in Ephes. Conc. [Δικαιώση τὴν ἀνθρώπου φύσιν ἐν ἑαυτῷ, καὶ τῶν τοῦ θανάτου δεσμῶν ἐξέλκεται, φύλλοις ἀναμαρτησίας στεφανούμενος παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ πατρός.—apud Bin. Conc. Tom. II. p. 133 F.]

^h Μὴ θαυμάσης εἰ κόσμος ὅλος ἐλυτρώθη· οὐ γὰρ ἦν ἄνθρωπος ψιλός, ἀλλ' υἱὸς Θεοῦ μονογενῆς, ὁ ὑπεραποθνήσκων, &c.—Cyrill. Hier. Catech. XIII. [Opp. p. 183 A.]

ⁱ In Ps. xcvi. [Opp. Tom. IV. col. 1035 B.]

which I give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world: and, He is a propitiation, saith St John, for our sins; and not only for our sins, but for the sins of the whole world: and, He is the Mediator of God and man, who gave himself (ἀντί-λυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων) a ransom, in the stead, and for all men, saith St Paul: and, He tasted death for every one, saith the author to the Hebrews: and, He was that one man, who, as it was expedient, did die for the whole nation of men: and, God was in him, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their sins: and, He came into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might by him be saved, (or freed from condemnation): and, As by the offence of one man judgment came upon all men to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one, mercy came upon all to justification of life. The end we see of our Saviour's performances was, that he might wipe off the guilt of sin from all mankind, that he might reverse the condemnation passed thereupon, and that he might remove the punishment due thereto; or that, absolving the first man's sin, he might take it away from the whole race, as St Athanasius^k speaks.

All men have sinned, and come short (or are destitute) of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace, by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. He was born under the law, that he might redeem those which were under the law. He that knew no sin was made sin, (was punished and dealt with as a

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1 John ii. 2.

1 Tim. ii.

5.

Heb. ii. 9.

John xi. 50;

xviii. 14;

iii. 17.

2 Cor. v. 19.

John iii.

17.

Rom. v. 18;

iii. 23, 24.

Gal. iii. 13;

iv. 5.

2 Cor. v.

21.

^k ἵνα ἐκείνου λύων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, ἀπὸ παντὸς αὐτὴν ἄρῃ τοῦ γένους.
—Athanas. in Pass. [Opp. Tom. ii. p. 90 c.]

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sinner,) *that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, (that we might be capable of being esteemed and dealt with as righteous by God upon his account.) So that the result is, divine justice being fully satisfied, and the honour of God fully repaired, (in regard to all sins past and future,) the mouth of vengeance being stopped, the claims of death and hell being evacuated, that general sentence of condemnation (passed upon all the sons of Adam) is suspended, death ceases to reign by any just power, or inevitable necessity; (it is as St Paul saith, abolished or abrogated as to any lawful right, or necessary force it hath; the rigour and severity of that law, which upon pain of death exacteth most punctual obedience, (and which consequently doth expose all men to unavoidable condemnation,) is tempered and abated, a foundation is laid for the shewing mercy, and granting pardon. In respect whereto,

2Tim. i. 10.
Gal. iii. 10,
12.
Rom. x. 5.

3 Our Lord is the Saviour of all men, as having in the behalf of mankind transacted and ratified a new covenant, very necessary for, and very conducive to, the salvation of mankind; whereby salvation is made attainable, and is really tendered unto all, upon feasible and equal conditions. According to the purport whereof, upon any man (however stained or loaded with the guilt of most heinous transgressions) his embracing the overtures thereof, consenting to, and complying with the terms propounded therein, that is, sincerely believing, and seriously repenting; returning to God with hearty desires and earnest resolutions to serve him; God is ready to dispense mercy and pardon, and immediately receiveth the person into grace

and favour with him; yea, the man continuing to perform a faithful, though imperfect obedience, an obedience suitable to man's natural infirmity and frailty, and proportionable to the assistances afforded him, God further promiseth to bestow inestimable blessings and rewards of joy and happiness. That covenant which the prophets implied of old, when (beside and beyond what the Jewish law did import) they preached thus: *Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings, cease to do evil—though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool: and, Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon: and, If the wicked man will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die,* (so God in Isaiah and Ezekiel declareth his intention to proceed with men, avowing that way of his to be most equal and fair). This is that covenant which our Lord commanded his Apostles to declare and propound to all mankind; *Go ye, said he to them, into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; that Gospel according to which, as it is expressed in St Luke, Repentance and remission of sins ought to be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem; in respect to which, St Peter says, that God hath exalted our Lord to be a Prince and a Saviour, to grant repentance to Israel, and remission of sins; (to grant repentance, that is, as the Apostle to the*

Isai. i. 16;
i. 18;
lv. 7.
Ezek. xviii.
21.
Mark xvi.
15.
Luke xxiv.
47.
Acts v. 31.

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Heb. xii.

17.

Phil. iv. 3.

Hebrews and Clemens Romanus speak, μετανοίας τόπον, room for repentance, or capacity to receive pardon upon repentance); concerning which covenant that Clemens, (the fellow-labourer of St Paul, and whom Clemens Alexandrinus¹ calleth an apostle,) in that excellent, admirable, and almost canonical Epistle to the Corinthians, which, as Eusebius^m and Jeromeⁿ tell us, was anciently publicly read in most churches, hath these remarkably full and clear expressions; *Let us, saith he, look steadfastly upon the blood of Christ, and let us see how precious to God his blood is, which being shed for our salvation, did bring the grace of repentance to the whole world. Let us attentively regard all ages, and observe that in every generation the Lord granted place of repentance to them who*

Heb. viii. 6;

would turn unto him^o. This is that new and better covenant, established upon better promises, (cancelling all former, exceptionable, imperfect, and ineffectual compacts, referring to man's interest and duty,) about which the Apostle to the Hebrews discourseth, and whereof he calleth our Lord the Mediator and Sponsor; in regard to which St Paul calleth him the *Mediator between God and man*;

ix. 15;

xii. 24;

vii. 22.

2 Cor. iii. 6.

¹ [Ὁ ἀπόστολος Κλήμης.—Strom. iv. 17. Opp. Tom. ii. p. 609.]

^m [Τούτου δὴ οὖν τοῦ Κλήμεντος ὁμολογουμένη μία ἐπιστολὴ φέρεται, μεγάλη τε καὶ θαυμασία . . . ταύτην δὲ καὶ ἐν πλείστοις ἐκκλησίαις.—Euseb. Hist. Eccl. iii. 16. Tom. i. p. 107.]

ⁿ [Scripsit ex persona Romanæ Ecclesiæ ad Ecclesiam Corinthiorum valde utilem Epistolam, quæ et in nonnullis locis publice legitur.—Catal. Script. Eccles. cap. xv. Opp. Tom. iv. p. ii. col. 107.]

^o Ἀτενίσωμεν εἰς τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἴδωμεν ὥς ἐστι τίμιον τῷ Θεῷ αἷμα αὐτοῦ, ὅτι διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν ἐκχυθὲν, παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ μετανοίας χάριν ὑπήνεγκεν. Ἀτενίσωμεν εἰς τὰς γενεὰς πάσας καὶ καταμάθωμεν ὅτι ἐν γενεᾷ καὶ γενεᾷ μετανοίας τόπον ἔδωκεν ὁ δεσπότης τοῖς βουλομένοις ἐπιστραφῆναι ἐπ' αὐτόν.—Clem. ad Corinth. Ep. i. cap. vii. [Cotel. Pat. Apost. Tom. i. p. 150.]

plainly declaring all men to have a concernment SERM.
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and interest therein; for this supposition he useth
as an argument proving God's universal desire of
man's conversion and salvation: *Who would have* 1 Tim. ii. 4,
all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of ^{5.}
the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator
between God and man, the man Christ Jesus^p. By
virtue of which covenant it is, that any such de-
grees of love or fear toward God, such as men
are capable of, are available, any righteous per-
formances, such as our weakness can produce, are
acceptable, any honest endeavours do receive coun-
tenance and encouragement; and that, as St Peter
observed, *In every nation he that feareth God, and* Acts x. 35.
worketh righteousness, is accepted by him; although
his fear of God be not so intense or pure; his right-
eousness not so exact and unblameable, as, accord-
ing to extremity of law and duty, they should be.
From which covenant so far is any man, according
to God's intention and desire, from being excluded,
that all men are seriously invited, vehemently
exhorted, earnestly entreated to enter into it, and
to partake the benefits exhibited thereby. Every
man who feeleth himself to want those benefits,
and is desirous of mercy and ease from the guilt
and burden of his sins, may come and welcome.
Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; Isai. lv. 1.
so the evangelical Prophet proclaims: and, *If any* John vii.
man thirsteth, let him come to me and drink, crieth ^{37.}
Matt. xi.
our Lord; and, *Come to me all ye that are weary* ^{28.}
and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Δεῦτε

^p Quo dicto, ostenditur nullum hominem secundum naturam
esse pollutum; sed æqualiter omnes ad Christi gratiam provocari.—
Hier. ad Aug. [Epist LXXIV. Opp. Tom. iv. p. ii. col. 620.]

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20.Acts xvii.
30.

πάντες, *Come all to me*: all men therefore, saith Origen, who from the nature of sin do labour and are burdened, are called to that rest, which is with the Word of God^q. And, *In Christ's name*, saith St Paul, *we are ambassadors, as though God by us entreateth: we pray you for Christ's sake, be ye reconciled to God*; the purport of which embassy, together with its extent, he elsewhere thus expresseth, Ταῦν παραγγέλλει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πᾶσι πανταχοῦ μετανοεῖν, *He now proclaimeth to all men everywhere that they should repent*; he consequently holds forth to all the benefits annexed to repentance. But of this we spake formerly.

4 Our Lord Jesus is the Saviour of all men, as having purchased and procured for them competent aids, whereby they are enabled to perform the conditions required of them in order to their salvation; to acquire a sufficient knowledge of their duty, to subdue their bad inclinations and lusts, to withstand temptations; or briefly, whereby they are enabled sincerely to repent of their sins, and acceptably to perform their due obedience. The truth of this point, taking in the consideration of man's natural state, may by good consequence be inferred from the truths of the points foregoing.

Eph. ii. 1.
Col. ii. 13.
Rom. vii.
14, 15.
Eph. v. 8.
2 Cor. iv. 6.
2 Pet. i. 19,
&c.

If men are naturally so dead in trespasses and sins^r, so enslaved and sold under sin; so very prone to evil, and averse to good; so dark and blind, that they cannot well discern what they should do; so corrupt and weak, that they cannot perform what

^q Πάντες οὖν ἄνθρωποι, διὰ τὴν τῆς ἁμαρτίας φύσιν κοπιῶντες καὶ πεφορτισμένοι, καλοῦνται ἐπὶ τὴν παρὰ τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀνάπαυσιν.—Orig. in Cels. Lib. iii. [p. 150.]

^r Ὁ ἐπὶ τὰ αἰσχρὰ ὄλισθος αὐτοφνοῦς ἀσθενείας ἔργον.—Max. Tyr. Diss. xxii. [Diss. xxxviii. p. 453. ed. Davis.]

they know and confess to be good, (as St Paul affirmeth men to be,) and consequently are of themselves indisposed to perform the duties acceptable to God^s, and requisite by his appointment toward their salvation, then, either our Lord hath provided for them a communication of grace sufficient to countervail or surmount that natural impotency, or all his designs for their good are imperfect or inconsistent, (aiming at an end, without providing requisite means, or removing necessary obstructions,) and his performances, whereby the forementioned benefits were procured, do prove ineffectual and fruitless. For God being appeased, and become well-affected to man's salvation, divine justice being satisfied, the rigour of law being mitigated, repentance being made available, and an obedience, agreeable to man's frailty, becoming acceptable, with all other the immediate results of our Saviour's transactions for man, would signify nothing in regard to him who still lieth under a necessity of sinning, or an inability of performing that which is indispensably exacted from him toward a complete enjoyment of those benefits and favours. In vain is the debt paid, and the bond cancelled, and the prison set open, and liberty proclaimed, and the prisoner called forth, if he be not himself able to knock off the fetters which detain him, and there is no help afforded, by which he may do it. But our Lord hath surely laid his designs more advisedly, and hath prosecuted his work more perfectly. Wherefore we may suppose, that

^s Si Deus non operatur in nobis, nullius possumus participes esse virtutis. Sine hoc quippe bono nihil est bonum, sine hac luce nihil est lucidum, sine hac sapientia nihil sanum, sine hac justitia nihil rectum.—De Voc. Gent. i. 8. [inter Prosp. Opp. col. 854 c.]

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a competency of grace and spiritual assistance is by virtue of our Saviour's performances really imparted to every man, qualifying him to do what God requires, and is ready to accept from him in order to his welfare; that our Saviour hath sent abroad his Holy Spirit, (that fountain of all true goodness, of all spiritual light, strength, and comfort,) like the sun, to shine, to warm, to dispense benign influences over the world; although it shineth not so brightly and vigorously, and its presence is not so visible and sensible in one place as another; which Holy Spirit, as it is in its essence omnipresent, so it is likewise in its energy incessantly working (in reasonable measure, right manner, and fit season, as wisdom ordereth) upon the minds and affections of men, infusing good thoughts and motions^t, impressing arguments and motives to good practice, cherishing and promoting good purposes, checking bad designs, restraining and reclaiming from bad courses. Our reason, however aided by exterior instruction and excitement, being unable to deal with those mighty temptations, oppositions, and discouragements we are to encounter with, he hath given us a wise and powerful Spirit, to guide and advise us, to excite and encourage us, to relieve and succour us in all our religious practice and spiritual warfare. So that all deliverance from the prevalency of temptation and sin we owe to his grace and assistance. That to these purposes the Holy Spirit is plentifully conferred upon all the visible members of the Christian Church, we have plainly declared in Scripture;

Joel ii. 28.
Acts ii. 17.

^t Τοῖς εὖ βιοῦν ἐπανηρημένοις ἰσχύει πρὸς τὴν λοιπὴν σωτηρίαν ἐμπνεῖ.—
Clem. Alex. [Opp. Strom. vii. Tom. ii. p. 860.]

it was a promise concerning the evangelical times, SERM. LIX. that God would pour forth his Spirit upon all flesh; the collation thereof is a main part of the evangelical covenant, (into a participation of which every Christian is admitted,) it being the finger of God, whereby God's law is impressed upon their inward parts, and engraven in their hearts, (as the Prophets describe the effects of this covenant.) And the end of our Saviour's passion is by St Paul declared to be, *That the blessing of Abraham might come unto the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit by faith;* that is, that becoming Christians we might partake thereof. And the apostolical ministry (that is, preaching the Gospel, and dispensing the privileges thereof) is therefore styled, *ἡ διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος*, *The ministry of the Spirit*. And the tasting of the heavenly gift, and partaking the Holy Ghost, is, according to the Apostle to the Hebrews, part of the character of a visible Christian, (such a Christian who might *παραπεσεῖν*, *fall away*, as he supposeth, and recrucify the Lord, and expose him to shame:) and St Peter makes reception of the Holy Ghost to be a concomitant or consequent of baptism; *Repent, saith he, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise* (or that promise of the Spirit, which is called the *Spirit of promise* peculiar to the Gospel) *is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call:* (that is, the Holy Spirit is promised to all, how far distant soever in time or place, who shall be invited unto, and shall embrace

Jer. xxxi.

33. Ezek. xi.

19. Heb. viii.

11. 2 Cor. iii. 3.

Gal. iii. 14.

2 Cor. iii. 8.

Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6.

Acts i. 38, 39.

Eph. i. 13.

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 Tit. iii. 5. Christianity;) and accordingly, St Paul saith of Christians, that *God according to his mercy hath saved us, by the laver of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*: and, *Know ye not*, saith he to the Corinthians, *that ye are the temple of God; and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* (that is, do ye not understand this to be a common property and privilege of Christians, such as ye profess yourselves to be?) And the union of all Christians into one body doth, according to St Paul, result from this one Spirit, as a common soul imparted to them all, inanimating and actuating the whole body, and every member thereof: for, *By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free, and have been all made to drink of one Spirit*. And it hath been the doctrine constantly with general consent delivered in and by the Catholic Church, that to all persons, by the holy mystery of baptism duly initiated into Christianity, and admitted into the communion of Christ's body, the grace of the Holy Spirit is communicated, enabling them to perform the conditions of piety and virtue which they undertake; and continually watching over them for accomplishment of those purposes; which Spirit they are admonished not to resist, to abuse, to grieve, to quench; but to use it well, and improve its grace to the working out their salvation. Thus much concerning the result of our Saviour's performances, in this kind, in respect to the community of Christians, we learn from the Holy Scripture and ecclesiastical tradition interpreting it; whence we may discern, that the communications of grace do not always flow from any special love or absolute

1 Cor. iii. 16.
 Eph. iv. 4.
 1 Cor. xii. 13.
 Eph. iv. 30.
 1 Cor. xii. 7.
 Phil. ii. 12, 13.

decree concerning men, but do commonly proceed from the general kindness and mercy of God, by our Lord procured for mankind; and consequently we may thence collect, that somewhat of this nature is to the same purpose, from the same source, and upon the same account, also granted and dispensed to others. Unto Christians, indeed, this great benefit (for the reward, the encouragement, the support of their faith; and for promoting their obedience, who are in a nearer capacity and more immediate tendency to salvation) is in a more plentiful measure, and a more conspicuous manner dispensed; but that, besides that dispensation, there have been other (not so plainly signified, or expressly promised, yet really imparted) communications of grace, in virtue of our Saviour's merits, there are (beside the main reason alleged, inferring it from our Lord's being the Saviour of all men) divers good inducements to believe. For even those Christians, to whom upon their faith the Holy Spirit is promised and bestowed, are by previous operations of God's grace (opening their minds, inclining their heart, and tempering their affections) induced to embrace Christianity, faith itself being a gift of God, and a fruit of the Holy Spirit. And before our Saviour's coming all good men have thereby been instructed and enabled to do well. And before any special revelation made, or any particular covenant enacted, (before the enclosure of a particular people or Church, the confinement of God's extraordinary presence and providence to one place,) divine grace appears diffused over several nations, being watchful in guiding and moving men to good, and withdrawing

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Eph. ii. 8.
Gal. v. 22.
Luke xxiv.
45.
Matt. xvi.
17.
John xvi.
12.
1 Cor. xii.
3.

SERM. LIX. — them from evil; neither is there reason why such an appropriation of special graces and blessings (upon special reasons) unto some should be conceived to limit or contract God's general favour, or to withdraw his ordinary graces from others^u. God surely (*Who is πλούσιος ἐν ἐλέει, rich in mercy; yea, hath τὸν ὑπερβάλλοντα πλούτον τῆς χάριτος, excessive riches of grace*) is not so poor or parsimonious, that being liberal to some should render him sparing toward others^x; his grace is not like the sea, which if it overflow upon one shore, must therefore retire from another; if it grow deep in one place, must become shallower in another. *Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened?* it is a question in Micah; and, *Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem?* is another question in Isaiah: No: *The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor his ear heavy, that it cannot hear*; at any time, in any place, he is no less able, no less ready than he ever was, to afford help to his poor creatures wherever it is needful or opportune. As there was of old an Abimelech among the Philistines, whom God by special warning deterred from commission of sin; a divine Melchisedec among the Canaanites; a discreet and honest Jethro in Midian; a very religious

Eph. ii. 4, 7.
Mic. ii. 7.
Isai. l. 2; lix. 1.
Gen. xx. 3; xxvi. 8.
Exod. xviii.

^u Ex quo perspicuum fit, natura omnibus Dei inesse notitiam, nec quemquam sine Christo nasci, et non habere semina in se sapientiæ, et justitiæ, reliquarumque virtutum. Unde multi absque fide et evangelio Christi, vel sapienter faciunt aliqua, vel sancte; &c. — Hier. in Galat. i. [Opp. Tom. iv. p. i, col. 233.]

^x Secundum scripturam credimus et piissime confitemur, quod nunquam universitati hominum divinæ providentiæ cura defuerit. Quæ licet exceptum sibi populum specialibus ad pietatem direxerit institutis, nulli tamen nationi hominum bonitatis suæ dona subtraxit, &c. — De Vocat. Gent. i. 5. [inter Prosp. Opp. col. 851 D.]

and virtuous Job in Arabia; who by complying with God's grace, did evidence the communication thereof in several nations; so it is not unreasonable to suppose the like cause now, although we cannot by like attestation certify concerning the particular effects thereof. We may at least discern and shew very conspicuous footsteps of divine grace, working in part, and producing no despicable fruits of moral virtue, (of justice and honesty, temperance and sobriety, benignity and bounty, courage and constancy in worthy enterprises, meekness, patience, modesty, prudence, and discretion, yea, of piety and devotion in some manner,) even among pagans^y, which if we do not allow to have been in all respects so complete, as to instate the persons endowed with them, or practisers of them, in God's favour, or to bring them to salvation^z; yet those qualities and actions (in degree, or in matter at least, so good and so conformable to God's law) we can hardly deny to have been the gifts of God, and the effects of divine grace; they at least themselves acknowledged so much; for, *Nulla sine Deo mens bona est*, *No mind is good without God*, said Seneca^a; and, *Θεία μοίρα ἡμῖν φαίνεται παραγιγνομένη ἡ ἀρετὴ, οἷς παραγίνεται*, *Virtue appears to proceed*

^y Καθ' ἑαυτὴν ἐδικαίου ποτὲ καὶ ἡ φιλοσοφία τοὺς Ἕλληνας.— Clem. Alex. [Strom. i. Opp. Tom. i. p. 377.]

Quædam tamen facta vel legimus, vel novimus, vel audimus, quæ secundum justitiæ regulam non solum vituperare non possumus, sed etiam merito recteque laudamus.—Aug. de Spir. et Lit. cap. xxvii. [Opp. Tom. x. col. 111 B.]

^z Mortalem vitam honestare possunt, æternam conferre non possunt.—Prosper con. Collat. [cap. xii. Opp. col. 337 D.]

^a Sen. Ep. LXXIII. [14.]

Nemo vir magnus sine aliquo afflatu divino unquam fuit.—Cic. de Nat. Deorum, ii. [66. 167.]

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*from a divine dispensation to them who partake of it, said Socrates^b: and, Αἱ δὲ ἀρισταὶ ψυχῆς φύσεις, ἀμφισβητήσιμοι ἐν μεθορίᾳ τῆς ἀκρας ἀρετῆς πρὸς τὴν ἐσχάτην μοχθηρίαν καθωρμισμένοι, δέονται ξυναγωνίστου Θεοῦ καὶ ξυλλήπτορος τῆς ἐπὶ θάτερα τὰ κρείττω ῥοπῆς καὶ χειραγωγίας; The best natured souls being constituted in the middle, between the highest virtue and extreme wickedness, do need God to be their succourer and assistant in the inclining and leading them to the better side; saith Maximus Tyrius^c. St Austin himself, who seems the least favourable in his judgment^d concerning their actions and state, who calls their virtues but images and shadows of virtue, (*non veras, sed verisimiles*,) splendid sins; acknowledges those virtuous dispositions and deeds to be the gifts of God^e, to be laudable, to procure some reward, to avail so far, that they, because of them, shall receive a more tolerable and mild treatment from divine justice; which things considered, such persons do at least, by virtue of grace imparted to them, obtain some part of salvation, or an imperfect kind of salvation, which they owe to our Lord, and in regard whereto he may be called in a sort their Saviour.*

But although the torrent of natural pravity hath prevailed so far, as that we cannot assign or nominate any (among those who have lived out of the pale) who certainly or probably have obtained

^b Plat. Menon [389 B.]

^c Diss. xxii. [Diss. xxxviii. p. 453, ed. Davis.]

^d Sed ad hoc eos in die iudicii cogitationes suæ defendent, ut tolerabilius puniantur. Minus enim Fabricius quam Catilina punietur, &c.—non veras virtutes habendo, sed a veris virtutibus non plurimum deviando.—Aug. [con. Jul. Pelag. iv. Opp. Tom. x. col. 598 A. B.]

^e Ipsius namque corporis—si qua bona—non sunt nisi ex Deo—quanto magis animi bona donare nullus alius potest.—Id. [Ep. cxlv. Opp. Tom. ii. col. 468 F.]

salvation, yet doth it not follow thence, that a sufficient grace was wanting to them. The most universal practice contrary to the intents of grace doth not evince a defect of grace; for we see that the same cause hath in a manner universally overborne and defeated other means and methods designed and dispensed by God for the instruction and emendation of mankind.

God's Spirit did long strive with the inhabitants of the old world: yet no more than one family was bettered or saved thereby. God by his good Spirit instructed the Israelites in the wilderness, as Nehemiah saith; yet no more than two persons did get into Canaan: that people afterward had afforded to them great advantages of knowledge and excitements to piety, (so that God intimates, that he could not have done more for them, in that regard, than he had done.) Yet, *There is none that understandeth, or seeketh after God*, was a complaint in the best times. The pagans had the means of knowing God, as St Paul affirmeth, yet, generally, *They grew vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened*; from which like cases and examples we may infer, that divine grace might be really imparted, although no effect correspondent to its main design were produced. Neither, because we cannot allege any evident instances of persons converted or saved by virtue of this grace, (this *parcior occultiorque gratia*, more sparing and secret grace, as the good writer *de Vocatione Gentium* calls it^f;) are we forced to grant

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Gen. vi. 3.
1 Pet. iii.
20.

Neh. ix. 20.

Isai. v. 4.

Ps. xiv.

Rom. i. 21.

[^f Adhibita enim semper est universis hominibus quædam supernæ mensura doctrinæ, quæ etsi parcioris occultiorisque gratiæ fuit, sufficit tamen, sicut Dominus judicavit, quibusdam

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 I Kings
 xix. 14, 18.

there were none such; but as in Israel when Elias said, *The children of Israel have forsaken God's covenant, thrown down his altars, and slain his prophets with the sword; and I, I only am left;* there were yet in Israel, living closely, *Seven thousand knees, who had not bowed to Baal:* so among the generations of men, commonly overgrown with ignorance and impiety, there might, for all that we can know, be divers persons indiscernible to common view, who, by complying with the influences of God's grace, have obtained competently to know God, and to reverence him; sincerely to love goodness, and hate wickedness; with an honest heart, to observe the laws of reason and righteousness, in such a manner and degree which God might accept; so that the grace afforded might not only *sufficere omnibus in testimonium, (suffice to convince all men,)* but *quibusdam in remedium, (to correct and cure some,)* as that writer *de Vocatione Gentium* speaks^g. The consideration of God's nature and providence doth serve further to persuade the truth of this assertion. If God be rich in mercy and bounty toward all his creatures, as such, (and such he frequently asserts himself to be,) if he be all-present and all-provident, as he certainly is, how can we conceive him to stand as an unconcerned spectator of what men do, in affairs of this consequence? that he should be present beholding men to run precipitantly into desperate mischiefs and miscarriages, without offering to stay or obstruct them; struggling with their vices and follies, with-

Ps. cxlv. 9.

ad remedium, omnibus ad testimonium. Lib. II. 15. inter Prosp. Opp. col. 901 E.]

^g Ibid.

out affording them any relief or furtherance; assaulted by strong temptations, without yielding any support or succour; panting after rest and ease, without vouchsafing some guidance and assistance toward the obtaining them? How can he see men invincibly erring and inevitably sinning, without making good what the Psalmist says of him: *Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way*; to withhold his grace in such cases seemeth inconsistent with the kind and compassionate nature of God, especially such as now it stands, being reconciled to mankind by the *Mediator of God and men, Christ Jesus*. He also, that is so bountiful and indulgent toward all men in regard to their bodies and temporal state; *Who preserveth their life from destruction, who protecteth them continually from danger and mischief; Who openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desires of every living thing; Who satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness*; Who, as St Paul speaketh, *filleth men's hearts with food and gladness*; is it likely that he should altogether neglect their spiritual welfare, and leave their souls utterly destitute of all sustenance or comfort; that he should suffer them to lie fatally exposed to eternal death and ruin, without offering any means of redress or recovery? To conceive so of God seemed very unreasonable even to a pagan philosopher: *Do you think, saith Maximus Tyrius, that divination, poetry, and such like things, are by divine inspiration insinuated into men's souls, and that virtue (so much better, and so much rarer a thing) is the work of moral art?* You have forsooth a worthy conceit of God, who take him to be liberal in bestowing mean

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Ps. xxv. 8.

1 Tim. ii. 5.

Ps. ciii. 4;

cxlv. 16;

cvii. 9.

Acts xiv.
17.

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LIX.Acts xvii.
25;xiv. 17;
xvii. 27.
Rom. i. 19;
ii. 15.

things, and sparing of better things^h. He that, as St Paul saith, giveth to all men life, breath, and all things, will he withhold from any that best of gifts, and most worthy of him to give, that grace whereby he may be able to serve him, to praise him, to glorify him, yea, to please and gratify him; to save a creature and subject of his; the thing wherein he so much delighteth? From hence also, that God hath vouchsafed general testimonies of his goodness, inducements to seek him, footsteps whereby he may be discovered and known, a light of reason and law of nature written upon men's hearts; attended with satisfactions, and checks of conscience; so many dispositions to knowledge and obedience, as St Paul teacheth us; we may collect that he is not deficient in communicating interior assistances, promoting the good use and improvement of those talents; for that otherwise the bestowing them is frustraneous and useless; being able to produce no good effect; yea, it rather is an argument of unkindness, being apt only to produce an ill effect in those upon whom it is conferred; an aggravation of sin, an accumulation of guilt and wrath upon them.

If it be said, that having such grace is inconsistent with the want of an explicit knowledge of Christ, and of faith in him; why may not we sayⁱ, that as probably most good people before our Lord's

^h Καί τοι μαντικὴν, καὶ τελεστικὴν, καὶ ποιητικὴν, καὶ καθάρσεις, καὶ χρησμοφodίας, ξυλλήβδην ἅπαντα, οὐκ ἂν εἴποις ἀντάξια εἶναι τῆς ἀρετῆς· εἶτα ἐκεῖνα μὲν ἡγῇ θεία τινὲ ἐπινοία ψυχαῖς ἀνθρωπίναις ἀνακρίνασθαι, τὸ δὲ τούτων σπανιώτερον, τὴν ἀρετὴν, ἔργον εἶναι τέχνης θνητῆς. Ὅτι πολλοῦ ἄξιον νομίζεις τὸ θεῖον, πρὸς μὲν τὰ φαῦλα καλῶς καὶ ἀφθόνως παρεσκευασμένον, πρὸς δὲ τὰ κρείττω ἄπορον.—Diss. XXII. [Diss. XXXVIII. p. 451. Ed. Davis.]

ⁱ So St Chrysostom. Vid. Montacut. Apparatus ad Origin Eccles. App. I. [pp. 30, 35.]

coming received grace without any such knowledge or faith ; that as, to idiots and infants, our Saviour's meritorious performances are applied, (in a manner unknowable by us,) without so much as a capacity to know or believe any thing ; so we (to whom God's judgments are inscrutable, and his ways uninvestigable) know not how grace may be communicated unto, and Christ's merits may avail for other ignorant persons? in respect to whom we may apply that of St John ; *The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.* Rom. xi. 33. However, that such persons may have a grace capacifying them to arrive to that knowledge and faith, to which fuller communications of grace are promised ; so that in reasonable esteem (as we shall presently shew) the revelation of evangelical truth, and the gift of faith, may be supposed to be conferred upon all men—so that we may apply to them that in the Revelation^k ; *Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man will hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in unto him, and sup with him, and he with me;* (that is, Behold, I allure every man to the knowledge and embracing of Christianity; if any man will open his mind and heart, so as to comply with my solicitations, I am ready to bestow upon him the participation of evangelical mercies and blessings :) and to such persons those promises and rules in the Gospel may appertain ; *He that asketh receiveth; he that seeketh findeth; to him that knocketh it shall be opened:* Luke xi. 10, 13; *The heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him: He that is ἐν ἐλαχίστῳ πιστὸς* xix. 17. *(faithful in the use of the least grace) shall be*

^k Εἰ τυφλοὶ ᾗτε, οὐκ ἂν εἶχετε ἁμαρτίαν.—John ix. 41; xv. 22.

SERM.
LIX.Luke xix.
26.

rewarded: and, *To him that hath* (or that diligently keepeth and husbandeth what he hath) *shall more be given.*

And how God sometimes dealeth with such persons the eminent instances of St Paul and Cornelius do shew. But concentering this point I spake somewhat before, and have perhaps been too large now; I shall only add that saying of the wise writer *de Vocatione Gentium*. *A pious mind, saith he, should not, I think, be troubled at that question, which is made concerning the conversion of all, or not all men; if we will not obscure those things which are clear, by those things which are secret; and while we wantonly insist upon things shut up, we be not excluded from those which are open and plain*¹. Which in effect is the same with this; that since we are plainly taught, that our Lord is the Saviour of all men; and it is consequent thence, that he hath procured grace sufficiently capacifying all men to obtain salvation; we need not perplex the business or obscure so apparent a truth, by debating how that grace is imparted; or by labouring overmuch in reconciling the dispensation thereof with other dispensations of Providence. But further,

5 Jesus is the Saviour of all men, as the conductor of all men into and through the way of salvation. It is a very proper title, and most due to those brave captains, who by their wisdom and

¹ Puto quod pius sensus non debeat in ea quæstione turbari, quæ de omnium et non omnium hominum conversione generatur; si ea quæ clara sunt, non de his quæ occulta sunt, obscuremus, et dum procaciter insistimus clausis, excludamur ab apertis, &c.—Lib. I. 9. [inter Prosp. Opp. col. 857 B.]

valour have freed their country from straits and oppressions. So were those judges and princes who anciently delivered Israel from their enemies commonly styled: *In the time of their trouble*, say the Levites in Nehemiah, *when they cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven; and, according to thy manifold mercies, thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hand of the enemy*; so are Othniel and Ehud particularly called, and Moses signally: *The same*, saith St Stephen of him, *did God send to be ἄρχοντα καὶ λυτρωτὴν, a Commander and a Saviour (or Redeemer) to the children of Israel*; for that he by a worthy and happy conduct did free them from the Egyptian slavery. And thus was Demetrius by the Athenians (for his delivering them from the Macedonian subjection, and restoring their liberty to them) entitled, *εὐεργέτης καὶ σωτὴρ, a benefactor and saviour*. Thus with greatest reason is Jesus so called, as being *ὁ ἀρχηγὸς τῆς σωτηρίας, the Captain of salvation*, (so he is called by the Apostle to the Hebrews); *ὁ ἀρχηγὸς τῆς ζωῆς, (the Captain of life*, as St Peter names him, the chief Leader unto eternal life); *ὁ τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγὸς, (the Captain of our faith*; he that hath revealed that saving doctrine, which is the power of God to salvation): and these titles we have conjoined by St Peter in the Acts; *Him hath God exalted, ἀρχηγὸν καὶ σωτῆρα, as a Captain and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins*. This he is to us several ways, by direction both instructive and exemplary; by his protection and governance; by his mating and quelling the enemies of man's salvation; which things more specially and

SERM.
LIX.Neh. ix.
27.Judg. iii. 9,
15.
Acts vii.
35.

Heb. ii. 10.

Acts iii. 15.

Heb. xii. 2.

Rom. i. 16.

Acts v. 31.

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completely he hath performed in respect to faithful Christians, yet in a manner also he hath truly done them for and toward all men; as we shall distinctly consider.

Col. i. 26.
Rom. xvi.
25.

6 Jesus is the Saviour of all men, we say, as having perfectly discovered and demonstrated the way and means of salvation; the gracious purposes of God concerning it; the duties required by God in order to it; the great helps and encouragements to seek it; the mighty determents from neglecting it; the whole will of God, and concernment of man in relation thereto; briefly, all saving truths he hath revealed unto all men: mysteries of truth, which were hidden from ages and generations, which no fancy of man could invent, no understanding could reach, no reason could by discussion clear, (concerning the nature, providence, will, and purpose of God; the nature, original, and state of man; concerning the laws and rules of practice, the helps thereto, the rewards thereof, whatever is important for us to know in order to happiness,) he did plainly discover, and bring to light; he did with valid sorts of demonstration assert and confirm. The doing which, (as having so much efficacy toward salvation, and being ordinarily so necessary thereto,) is often called saving; as particularly by St James; when he saith, *He that turns a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death.* And by St Paul; *Take heed to thy word and doctrine; for so doing thou shalt save thyself and thy hearers.* That our Lord hath thus (according to his design, and according to reasonable esteem) saved all men, we are authorized by the Holy Scripture to say; for he is there represented

James v.
20.

1 Tim. iv.
16.
1 Cor. ix.

22.
Rom. xi.

14.
2 Tim. iii.
15.

to be *The light of the world; The true light that enlighteneth every man coming into the world:* SERM. LIX.
The day-spring from on high, which hath visited us, John viii. 12; i. 9.
to give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet in the way of peace. Luke i. 78, 79.
 By him *The saving grace of God hath appeared unto all men.* Tit. ii. 11; iii. 4.
 By him (as Isaiah prophesied, and St John the Baptist applied it) *All flesh did see the salvation of God.* 2 Tim. i. 10.
 Of him it was also foretold, as St Paul teacheth us, *I have set thee for the light of the nations, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.* Acts xiii. 47.
 Coming *he preached peace* τοῖς μακρὰν καὶ τοῖς ἐγγύς (longe lateque) *to them that were far, and to them that were near,* that is, to all men every where. John ix. 5.
While I am in the world, said he, *I am the light of the world;* shining, like the sun, indifferently unto all; and when he withdrew his corporal presence, he further virtually diffused his light, for he sent his messengers with a general commission and command to teach all men concerning the benefits procured for them, and the duties required from them; *Going into the world, make all nations disciples, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you.* Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.
Going into the world, preach the Gospel unto every creature, Mark xvi. 15.
 (or, to the whole creation: so it ought to be.) *That in his name should be preached repentance and remission of sins unto all nations.* Luke xxiv. 47.
 And such was the tenor of the Apostolical commission; *Thou shalt be witness for him toward all men,* said Ananias to St Paul. Acts xxii. 15; xxvi. 17.
 Accordingly, in compliance with those orders, did the Apostles, in God's name, instruct and admonish all men, plainly teaching, seriously inviting to, strongly persuading, and

SERM.
LIX.Acts xvii.
30.

2 Cor. v. 20.

Col. i. 28;

i. 23.

1 Tim. ii 4.

John i. 18.

Luke i. 79.
Matt. iv.
16.
Rom. x. 14.

earnestly entreating all men to embrace the truth, and enjoy the benefits of the Gospel, and consequently to be saved: *The times of ignorance*, saith St Paul, *God having winked at, doth now invite all men every where to repent*: and, *We are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God—We pray you, you as members of that world which God was in Christ reconciling to himself*: and, *We preach Christ—warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, (or, render every man a good Christian.)* Thus was the Gospel, according to our Saviour's intent and order, preached, as St Paul saith of it, *ἐν πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει τῇ ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν, in the whole creation under heaven*; thus did God shew, that *He would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth*; whence our Lord (in regard to the nature and design of his performance in this kind) is the common Saviour, as the common master of truth, and enlightener of the world, and proclaimer of God's will to mankind.

If now it be inquired or objected; Why then is not the Gospel revealed unto all men? How comes it to pass, that no sound of this saving word, no glimpse of this heavenly light, doth arrive to many nations? How can so general and large intention consist with so particular and sparing execution? What benefit can we imagine them capable to receive from this performance of our Saviour, who still do sit in total ignorance of the Gospel, *In darkness, and the shadow of death*? How can they call upon him in whom they believe not? And

how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?

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To this suggestion I answer,

I That God's intentions are not to be interpreted, nor his performances estimated by events, depending on the contingency of human actions, but by his own declarations and precepts, together with the ordinary provision of competent means, in their own nature sufficient to produce those effects which he declares himself to intend or to perform. What he reveals himself to design, he doth really design it; what he says, that he performeth; he (according to moral esteem, that is, so far as to ground duties of gratitude and honour, proceedings of justice and reward) doth perform, although the thing upon other accounts be not effected.

Thus, for instance, God would have all men to live together here in peace, in order, in health, conveniently, comfortably, cheerfully; according to reason, with virtue and justice; and in the best state toward happiness: for these purposes he hath endued them with reasonable faculties, he hath engraven on their minds a natural law, he hath furnished them with all sorts of instruments and helps conducive to those ends; he promoteth them by dispensations of providence, and, probably, by internal influences of grace: yet often all those means, by the perverseness and stupidity of men, do prove ineffectual, so that wars, disorders, diseases, vices, iniquities and oppressions, troubles and miseries, do commonly abound in the world. Likewise God desires, that in his Church, knowledge and piety, peace and charity and good order should grow

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and flourish; to which purposes he hath appointed teachers to instruct, and governors to watch over his people: he hath obliged each man to advise and admonish his brother; he hath declared holy precepts and rules of practice; he hath propounded vast encouragements and rewards, and threatened dreadful punishments; he hath promised and doth afford requisite assistances; being himself always present and ready to promote those ends by his grace; yet notwithstanding, by the voluntary neglect or abuse of these means, (the guides being blind, negligent, unfaithful; or the people being indocile, sluggish, refractory; or both perverted with bad affections,) often ignorance, error, and impiety prevail, love is cool and dead, schisms and factions are rife in the Church. Which events are not to be conceived derogatory to God's good-will and good intentions, or to his kind and careful providence toward men; but we are notwithstanding to esteem and acknowledge him the author and donor of those good things; in respect to them no less blessing and praising him, than if they were really accomplished by man's concurrence and compliance; he having done his part in that due measure and manner which wisdom prompts; having indeed done the same, as when they are effected. So God having expressly declared, that he would have all men to know and embrace the Gospel, having made a universal promulgation thereof, having sent forth Apostles to disseminate it every where, having obliged every man to confer his best endeavour toward the propagation thereof; if by the want of fidelity, zeal, or industry in them, to whom this care is intrusted, or upon whom this

duty is incumbent; or if by the carelessness and stupidity of those, who do not regard what is done in the world; or if by men's voluntary shutting their eyes, or stopping their ears, (as the Jews did of old to the prophetic instructions and admonitions,) God's heavenly truth becometh not universally known, it is not reasonable to impute this default to God, or to conceive him therefore not universally to desire and design men's instruction and salvation consequent thereon. Let me, for the illustration of this matter, put a case, or propound a similitude. Suppose a great kingdom, consisting of several provinces, should have revolted from their sovereign; disclaiming his authority, neglecting and disobeying his laws; that the good prince, out of his goodness and pity toward them, (and upon other good considerations moving him thereto, suppose the mediation of his own son,) instead of prosecuting them with deserved vengeance, should grant a general pardon and amnesty, in these terms, or upon these conditions; that whoever of those rebels willingly should come in, acknowledge his fault, and promise future loyalty, or obedience to his laws declared to them, should be received into favour, have impunity, enjoy protection, and obtain rewards from him. Further, for the effectuating this gracious intent, suppose that he should appoint and commissionate messengers, empowering and charging them to divulge the purport of this act of grace to all the people of that kingdom. Admit now, that these messengers should go forth and seat themselves only in some provinces of that kingdom, proclaiming this universal pardon (universal as to the design, and as to the tenor thereof)

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only in those, neglecting others; or that striving to propagate it further, they should be rejected and repelled; or that from any the like cause the knowledge thereof should not reach to some remoter provinces; it is plain, that indeed the effect of that pardon would be obstructed by such a carriage of the affair; but the tenor of that act would not thereby be altered; nor would the failure in execution (consequent upon the ministers' or the people's misbehaviour) detract from the real amplitude of the prince's intent; no more, than the wilful incredulity, refusal, or non-compliance of some persons, where the business is promulged and notified, would prejudice the same. It is plain the prince meant favourably toward all, and provided carefully for them; although by accident (not imputable to him) the designed favours and benefits do not reach all. The case so plainly suits our purpose, that I need not make any application. The holy Fathers do by several like similitudes endeavour to illustrate this matter, and somewhat to assoil the difficulty. They compare our Saviour to the sun^m, who shines indifferently to all the world, although there be some private corners and secret caves, to which his light doth not come; although some shut their windows or their eyes, and exclude it; although some are blind, and do not see it. *That mystical Sun of Righteousness, saith St Ambrose, is risen to all, came to all, did*

^m Ἀκούσατε οὖν οἱ μακρὰν, ἀκούσατε οἱ ἐγγύς· οὐκ ἀπεκρύβη τινὰς ὁ Λόγος. φῶς ἐστὶ κοινὸν, ἐπιλάμπει πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις· οὐδεὶς Κιμμέριος ἐν Λόγῳ.—Clem. Alex. Cohort. ad Gent. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 71.—*Hear ye that are far; hear ye that are near: the Word is not hid to any: it is a common light: it shineth to all men; there is no Cimmerian in the Word.*

suffer and rose again for all—but if any one doth not believe in Christ, he defrauds himself of the general benefit. As if one shutting the windows should exclude the beams of the sun, the sun is not therefore not risen to allⁿ. They compare our Lord to a physician^o, who professes to relieve and cure all that shall have recourse to his help; but doth cure only those who seek for remedy, and are willing to take the medicine; because all, saith St Ambrose^p again, do not desire cure, but most do shun it, lest the ulcer should smart by medicaments; therefore *Volentes curat, non adstringit invitos*; *He cures only the willing, doth not compel those that are unwilling*; they only receive health, who desire medicine. Evangelical grace, say they, is like a fountain standing openly, to which all men have free access; at which all men may quench their thirst, if they will inquire after it, and go thereto. *The fountain of life*, saith Arnobius, *is open to all; nor is any man hindered or driven*

ⁿ Mysticus Sol ille justitiæ omnibus ortus est, omnibus venit, omnibus passus est, et omnibus resurrexit.—Si quis autem non credit in Christum, generali beneficio se fraudat; ut si quis clausis fenestris radios solis excludat, non ideo sol non ortus est omnibus, &c.—In Psal. cxviii. Serm. viii. [Opp. Tom. i. col. 1077 c.]

Si dies omnibus æqualiter nascitur, et si sol super omnes pari et æquali luce diffunditur, quanto magis Christus Sol et dies verus, in Ecclesia sua lumen vitæ æternæ pari æqualitate largitur.—Cypr. Ep. LXXVI.

^o Nunquid medicus non idcirco proponit in publico, ut omnes se ostendat velle salvare, si tamen ab ægris requiratur? Non est enim vera salus, si nolenti tribuatur.—Ambr. in 1 Tim. ii. Com. [Opp. Tom. ii. (App.) col. 292 E.]

^p Venit—ut vulnera nostra curaret. Sed quia non omnes medicinam expetunt, sed plerique refugiant, ne medicamentis compungatur vis ulceris, ideo volentes curat, non adstringit invitos.—de interp. David. Lib. iv. cap. ii. [Opp. Tom. i. col. 663 E.]

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from the right of drinking it^a. The covenant of grace is, say they, a door standing open to all, whereinto all have liberty to enter—*When an entrance, saith St Chrysostom, being opened to all, and there being nothing that hinders, some being wilfully naught abide without, they have no other but their own wickedness to impute their destruction unto*^r.

St Gregory Nazianzen resembles the grace of baptism (as to its community and freedom of use) to the breathing of the air, to the spreading of light, to the vicissitude of seasons, to the aspect of the creation^s; things most obvious and common to all.

If this answer do not fully satisfy, I adjoin further,

2 That God, beside that ordinary provision, is ready to interpose extraordinarily in disclosing his truth to them who are worthy of such favour, and fit to receive it; and that God's general desire and

^a Patet omnibus fons vitæ, neque ab jure potandi quisquam prohibetur, aut pellitur.—Arnob. Lib. II.

^r Ὅταν τῆς εἰσόδου πᾶσιν ἀνεωγμένης, καὶ μηδενὸς τοῦ κωλύοντος ὄντος, ἐθελοκακοῦντές τινες ἔξω μένωσι, παρ' οὐδένα ἕτερον, ἀλλ' ἢ παρὰ τὴν οἰκίαν πονηρίαν ἀπόλλυνται μόνον.—Chrys. in Joh. Hom. VIII. [Opp. Tom. II p. 587.]

Εἰ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον, πῶς ἀφώτιστοι μεμενήκασιν τοσοῦτοι; οὐ γὰρ δὴ πάντες ἐπέγνωσαν τοῦ Χριστοῦ τὸ σέβας. πῶς οὖν φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον; τόγε εἰς αὐτὸν ἦκον. εἰ δέ τινες ἐκόντες τοὺς τῆς διανοίας ὀφθαλμοὺς μύσαντες, οὐκ ἠθέλησαν παραδέξασθαι τοῦ φωτὸς τούτου τὰς ἀκτῖνας, οὐ παρὰ τὴν τοῦ φωτὸς φύσιν ἢ σκότῳσις ἐκείνοις, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τὴν κακουργίαν τῶν ἐκοντὶ ἀποστερούντων ἑαυτοὺς τῆς δωρεᾶς. ἢ μὲν γὰρ χάρις εἰς πάντας ἐκκέχυται πάντως δὲ ὁμοίως προσιεμένη, καὶ μετὰ τῆς Ἰσῆς καλοῦσα τιμῆς. οἱ δὲ οὐκ ἐθέλοντες ἀπολαῦσαι τῆς δωρεᾶς ταύτης, ἑαυτοῖς δίκαιοι ταύτην ἂν εἶεν λογίσασθαι τὴν πῆρῳσιν.—Id. Ibid.

^s Ὡς αἶρος πνεῦσιν, καὶ φωτὸς χύσιν, καὶ ὥρων ἀλλαγὰς, καὶ κτίσεως θέαν.—Greg. Naz. Orat. XL. [Opp. Tom. I. p. 696 c.]

design of revealing his truth to all men is very well consistent with his providential (not only negative and permissive, but even positive and active) withholding the discovery thereof from some persons, yea, some nations; for that neither his wisdom, goodness, or justice might permit him, that he should impart that revelation to such persons whom he seeth altogether indisposed to comply therewith, and unfit to profit thereby; who have extremely abused the lesser graces, and not improved or misimproved the lesser talents afforded them; detained inferior truths in unrighteousness, and have not liked to retain God in their knowledge, have therefore justly been delivered up to a reprobate sense; who have so depraved their minds with wicked prejudices and affections, that the truth being offered to them, they would certainly either stupidly neglect it or scornfully reject it; or, if admitting it in show, would unworthily abuse it; so that from the imparting the means of knowing it, no glory to God, no benefit to man would accrue, but rather contempt of God and prejudice to men would ensue upon it: there are some persons of that wicked and gigantic disposition, (contracted by evil practice,) that, should one offer to instruct them in truth, or move them to piety, would be ready to say with Polyphemus in Homer,

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Rom. i. 18,
28.

Isai. xxx.
10, 11.

Νήπιος εἶς, ὃ ξεῖν*, ἧ τηλόθεν εἰλήλουθας,
Ὅς με θεοὺς κέλει ἧ δειδίμεν, ἧ ἀλέασθαι†.

Friend, you are a fool, or a great stranger to me, who advisest me to fear or regard the Deity.

Or (which is the same) with Pharaoh: *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice? I know not the*

Exod. v. 2.

† [Odyss. ix. 273.]

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Prov. i. 24, 25. Luke x. 13. John xiv. 22, 23.

That God doth commonly observe this method (plainly suitable to divine justice, wisdom, and goodness) to dispense the revelation of his truth according to men's disposition to receive it, and aptness to make a fruitful and worthy use of it, to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance, as St John Baptist spake; and to withhold it from those who are indisposed to admit it, or unfit to profit by it; we may from divers express passages and notable instances (beside many probable intimations) of Scripture learn. We may on the one hand observe,

Matt. iii. 8. 1 Cor. xii. 7.

that those whom our Saviour did choose to call, were persons disposed easily upon his call to comply; to forsake their fathers and their nets; to leave their receipts of custom; to relinquish all, (relations, occupations, estates,) and to follow him; faithful Israelites without guile, like Nathaniel, (that is, as is probably conjectured, St Bartholomew;) men honestly devout, and charitable, like Zaccheus; that he chose to converse with publicans and sinners, men apt to be convinced of their errors, and touched with the sense of their sins; apt to see their need of mercy and grace, and therefore ready to entertain the overtures of them; that he blesses God for revealing his mysteries to babes, (to innocent and well-meaning, unprejudicate and uncorrupted persons,) such as if men were not, they could in nowise enter into the kingdom of heaven, or become Christians; those poor in spirit, of whom is the kingdom of heaven; those foolish things which God chooses as most fit objects of his mercy and grace; that he enjoined his disciples in their travels for the promulgation and propagation of the Gospel, to inquire concerning the worthiness or fitness of persons, and accordingly to make more close applications to them: *Into what city or village ye enter, inquire who therein is worthy*; and entering in abide there. Of this proceeding we have a notable instance in Cornelius, who for his honest piety (correspondent to the proportion of knowledge vouchsafed him) was so acceptable to God, that in regard thereto he obtained from him the revelation of truth in a peculiar and extraordinary manner. And St Paul was another most remarkable example thereof; who for the like reason was

SERM.
LIX.Matt. iv.
18.John i. 24,
37.Matt. xix.
27.John i. 47.
Luke xix.

8, 9.

Matt. xxi.
31.Luke v.
30, 31.Matt. xi.
25;xviii. 3;
xix. 14;
v. 3.1 Cor. i.
27.

Matt. x. 11.

Acts x. 1, 2.

- SERM. LIX. so wonderfully called, as himself intimates, describing himself to have been *ζηλωτῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ*, *zealously affected toward God*; according to the Acts xxii. 3. *Phil. iii. 6.* *righteousness in the law, blameless*; one that had continually behaved himself with all good conscience toward God; who even in the persecution of God's truth did proceed with an honest meaning and according to his conscience, for which cause he saith, that God had mercy on him; foreseeing how willingly he would embrace the truth, and how earnestly promote it. We may also observe, how in the Acts of the Apostles the Holy Spirit commonly directed the Apostles to such places, where a competent number of people were well disposed to receive the truth; who were *εὐθετοὶ εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ*, *well disposed to the kingdom of heaven*, and consequently by God's foresight, *τεταγμένοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον*, *ordained to have the word of eternal life* (the *τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ Θεοῦ*, as it is in a parallel place called) discovered to them: such people as the Luke ix. 62. *Acts xiii. 48;* *xxviii. 28;* *xvii. 11;* Bereans, men ingenuous and tractable; who consequently entertained the word, *μετὰ πάσης προθυμίας*, *with all promptitude and alacrity*. To such persons God sometimes by extraordinary revelation directed the Apostles to preach; as to the Corinthians, in respect to whom the Lord spake to St *xviii. 9, 10;* Paul in a vision, saying, *Fear not, but speak, and be not silent*; for *I am with thee, because λαὸς ἐστὶ μοι πολὺς*, *there is for me much people in this city*; much people whom I see disposed to comply with my truth. *xvi. 9.* So in behalf of the Macedonians, *Ἀνὴρ τις Μακεδὼν*, *A certain man of Macedonia*, was in a vision seen to St Paul, exhorting him and saying, *Passing into Macedonia, help us*. Thus on that

hand doth God take special care that his truth be manifested to such as are fitly qualified to embrace it and use it well: thus is God ready to make good that answer of Pothinus (bishop of Lyons, and immediate successor to St Irenæus) to the prefect, who asking him, *Who was the Christians' God*, was answered, *If thou be worthy, thou shalt know*^u; thus, as the Wise Man divinely saith, *The divine Wisdom*, *ἀξιους αὐτῆς περιέρχεται ζητοῦσα*, *goeth about seeking*^{16.} *such as are worthy of her; sheweth herself favourable unto them in their ways, and meeteth them in every thought.*

And on the other hand, that God withholds the special discoveries of his truth, upon account of men's indispositions and demerits, may likewise very plainly appear. We may suppose our Lord to have observed himself what he ordered to his disciples; *Not to give that which is holy to dogs*, *nor to cast their pearls before swine*, (not to expose the holy and precious truth to very lewd and fierce people, who would snarl at it and trample upon it:) we may allow God in his dispensation of his truth and grace to do what he bids the Apostles to do: before he enters into any house, or applies himself to any person, to examine whether the house or person be worthy, that is, willing to receive him, and apt to treat him well; if not, to decline them. Our Lord, we see, did leave even his own country, seeing men there were not disposed to use him with due honour and regard; seeing they were possessed with vain prejudices, apt to obstruct the efficacy of his divine instructions and miraculous

^u [Ἀνεταζόμενος δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἡγεμόνος τίς εἴη Χριστιανῶν ὁ Θεός, εἶπεν· εἰ ἂν ᾖ ἀξίος, γνώσῃ.—Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. 1. Tom. 1. p. 204.]

SERM.
LIX.Matt. xiii.
58.I Cor. ii.
14.Matt. xxi.
31.Rom. viii.
7.

James iv.

4.
I John ii.
15.I Cor. i.
23.Matt. xi.
25.

performances; so that he was not likely (according to the ordinary way of divine providence) to produce any considerable effect towards their conversion. *He could not*, it is said, *do many miracles there because of their unbelief*; he could not, that is, according to the most just and wise rules he did observe, he would not do them; because he perceived the doing them would not conduce to any good purpose; that they were not apt to look upon those works as the effects of divine power and goodness, performed for their benefit, (for inducing them to faith and repentance,) but rather that the doing them would expose God's mercy to contempt or reproach, at least to neglect or disregard. Hence our Saviour declined conversing with persons indisposed to (those *ψυχικοί*, who cannot *δέχεσθαι τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος*) receive benefit by his instruction and example; to grow wiser or better by his conversation; as the Pharisees and Scribes; men prepossessed with corrupt opinions and vicious affections, obstructive to the belief of his doctrine and observance of his laws; and worldly persons; proud and self-conceited, crafty and deceitful, covetous, ambitious, and worldly men, incorrigibly tinctured with that *φρόνημα τῆς σαρκός*, carnal wisdom and affection; which is enmity to God; *So that it is not subject to the law of God, nor can be*; inextricably engaged in the friendship of the world, which is enmity to God: to such men the Gospel would certainly be a scandal or a folly: they would never be able to relish or digest the doctrine of purity, self-denial, patience, and the like doctrines opposite to carnal sense and conceit which it teacheth. From such wise and prudent men (con-

ceited of their little wisdoms, and doting upon
 their own fancies) God did conceal those heavenly
 mysteries, which they would have despised and
 derided: those *Many wise according to the flesh,*
many powerful, many noble, God did not choose to
 call into his Church. Accordingly we may observe
 in the history of the Apostles, that God's Spirit
 did prohibit the Apostles passing through some
 places, it discerning how unsuccessful (at those
 seasons, in those circumstances, according to those
 dispositions of men) their preaching would be:
Passing through Phrygia and Galatia, being hin-
dered by the Spirit to speak the word in Asia;
coming to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia,
but the Spirit suffered them not. Moreover there
 is plainly the like reason why God should with-
 hold his saving truth from some people, as why he
 should withdraw it from others, when it is abused
 or proves fruitless: but of such withdrawing we
 have many plain instances, attended with the
 declaration of the reasons of them: our Lord pro-
 phesied thus concerning the Jews; *I say unto you,*
that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you,
and shall be given to a nation doing the fruits
thereof; they, when our Saviour would have ga-
 thered them under his wings, wilfully refusing.
 Our Lord charged his disciples, when by any they
 were repulsed or neglected in their preaching, to
 leave those persons and places, shaking off the
 dust from their feet, in token of an utter (εἰς
 μαρτύριον ἐπ' αὐτοῦς) detestation and desertion of
 them: and accordingly we see them practising in
 their acts; when they perceived men perversely
 contradictory, or desperately senseless and stupid,

SERM.
LIX.

1 Cor. i. 26.
James ii. 5.

Acts xvi. 6,
7.

Matt. xxi.
43;

x. 14.
Luke ix. 5.

Acts xiii.
51; xviii. 6.

SERM.
LIX.Acts xiii.
46;
xxviii. 26.

Rev. ii. 5.

John iii.
19.

2 Cor. ii. 16.

so that they clamoured against the Gospel, and thrust it from them, they abstained from further dealing with them, turning their endeavours otherwise, toward persons of a more docile and ingenuous temper; thence more susceptible of faith and repentance: *To you*, say Paul and Barnabas to the contradicting and reproachful Jews, *it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken; but seeing you put it from you, (or thrust it away from you, ἀπωθείσθε αὐτὸν,) and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, we turn to the Gentiles.* So when the Church of Ephesus was grown cold in charity, and deficient in good works, God threatens to remove her candlestick; or to withdraw from her that light of truth, which shone with so little beneficial influence. It seems evident that God for the like reasons may withhold the discovery of his truth, or forbear to interpose his providence, so as to transmit light thither, where men's deeds are so evil that they will love darkness rather than light; where their eyes are so dim and weak, that the light will but offend, and by the having it, hurt them; where they, by the having it declared to them, will only incur further mischief and misery; it would prove to them but *ὀσμὴ θανάτου, a deadly scent*, as the most comfortable perfumes are offensive sometimes and noxious to distempered bodies^x. Wherefore, as where the light doth shine most clearly, it is men's voluntary pravity, that by it many are not effectually brought to salvation; so it is men's voluntary depraving

^x Καὶ γὰρ τὰς ὕς (φασὶ) τὸ μῦρον πνίγει.—Chrys. [verbatim. Ἐπεὶ καὶ τὰς ὕς τὸ μῦρον λέγεται πνίγειν.—in 2 Cor. Orat. v. Opp. Tom. III. p. 575.]

and corrupting themselves, (misusing their natural light, choking the seeds of natural ingenuity, thwarting God's secret whispers and motions, complying with the suggestions of the wicked one,) so as to be rendered unmeet for the susception of God's heavenly truth and grace, which hinders God (who proceedeth ordinarily with men, in sweet and reasonable methods, not in way of impetuous violence and coaction) from dispensing them: we may say of such in the words of the Prophet, *They have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you.* Τῇ ἐαυτοῦ ἀγαθότητι πᾶσιν ὁ ^{Isai. lxvi.} ^{3.} Κύριος ἐγγίξει· μακρύνομεν δὲ ἐαυτοὺς ἡμεῖς διὰ τῆς ἁμαρτίας, *God doth by his goodness approach to all, but we set ourselves at distance by sin, saith St Basil^y; and, Ὅπου αὐτοπροαίρετος πονηρία, ἐκεῖ καὶ ἀποχὴ τῆς χάριτος, Where there is self-chosen or affected wickedness, there is a withholding of grace, saith another Father^z. The Gospel, if it be hidden, ^{2 Cor. iv. 3;} it is, as St Paul says, *hidden, ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις, in viris perditis, among lost men, (that is, men desperately gone in wickedness, incorrigible, unreclaimable people,) in whom the God of this world* ^{iv. 4.} (that is, as St Chrysostom expounds it, not the Devil, but the good God himself) *hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, so that the light of the glorious Gospel hath not shined to them. Πῶς οὖν ἐτύφλωσεν; How then did God blind them? (saith St Chrysostom^a) οὐκ ἐνεργήσας εἰς τοῦτο· ἀπαγε·**

^y Bas. in Ps. xxxiii. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 155 A.]

^z [Manes] apud Cyrill. Hier. [Catech. vi. Opp. p. 105 B.]

^a [In. 2 Cor. Orat. viii. Opp. Tom. iii. p. 594.]

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not by any efficacy of his upon them toward that; fie on that; ἀλλ' ἀφείς καὶ συγχωρήσας, but by permission and concession; καὶ γὰρ ἔθος τῇ γραφῇ οὕτω λέγειν, for so the Scripture is wont to speak; ἐπειδὴν γὰρ αὐτοὶ ἠπίστησαν πρῶτοι, καὶ ἀναξίους ἑαυτοὺς κατεσκεύασαν τοῦ ἰδεῖν τὰ μυστήρια, καὶ αὐτὸς λοιπὸν εἴασεν. ἀλλὰ τί ἔδει ποιῆσαι; πρὸς βίαν ἔλκειν, καὶ ἐκκαλύπτειν μὴ βουλομένοις ἰδεῖν; ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἂν κατεφρόνησαν, καὶ οὐδ' ἂν εἶδον; Seeing, saith he, they disbelieved first, and constituted themselves unworthy to see the mysteries, even God at last let them alone; for what should he have done? Should he have drawn them violently, and discovered it to them being unwilling to see? They would then have more despised it, and not have seen it. God is ever willing and ready to dispense his mercies and favours, but he is not wont to do it extraordinarily, (or beside the course of his ordinary provision,) but in a proper and fit season, (in that καιρὸς εὐπρόσδεκτος, acceptable time and day of salvation, when he seeth men capable of receiving them^b;) which season commonly dependeth upon man's will and choice, or the results of them. Σωτὴρ γὰρ ἐστίν· οὐχὶ τῶν μὲν, τῶν δ' οὐ. πρὸς δὴ ὅσον ἐπιτηδειότητος ἕκαστος εἶχεν, τὴν ἑαυτοῦ διένειμεν εὐεργεσίαν. For (saith Clemens Alexandrinus in his 7th of the Stromata, where he clearly and fully affirms our present doctrine) our Lord is not the Saviour of some and not of others: but, according as men are fitly disposed, he hath distributed his beneficence to all^c.

Luke xix.
44.
2 Cor. vi. 2.
Rom. xiii.
11.

^b Καθόλου γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς οἶδεν τοὺς τε ἀξίους τῶν ἀγαθῶν καὶ μὴ. ὁθεν τὰ προσήκοντα ἑκάστοις δίδωσιν.—Clem. Alex. Strom. viii. [Opp. Tom. ii. p. 855.]

^c [Tom. ii. p. 832.]

St Augustine himself somewhere speaketh no less; SERM. LIX.
or rather more: *Præcedit aliquid in peccatoribus*,
saith he, *quo, quamvis nondum sint justificati, digni efficiantur justificatione: et idem præcedit in aliis peccatoribus quo digni sint obtusione*^d. But,

3 If all these considerations do not thoroughly satisfy us concerning the reason of God's proceedings in this case, we may consider that God's providence is inscrutable and impenetrable to us; that, according to the Psalmist, as *God's mercy is in the heavens, and his faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds; so his righteousness is like the great mountains*, (too high for our reason to climb,) *and his judgments, ἄβυσσος πολλή, a great abyss*, too deep for our feeble understanding to fathom; that his ways are more subtle and spiritual than to be traced by our dim and gross sight. So upon contemplation of a like case, although, as it seems, hardly so obscure or unaccountable as this, the case concerning God's conditional rejection of that people, whom he in a special manner had so much and so long favoured, St Paul himself doth profess. That therefore Rom. xi. 33.
although we cannot fully resolve the difficulty, we notwithstanding without distrust should adhere to those positive and plain declarations, whereby God representeth himself seriously designing and earnestly desiring, *That all men should come to the knowledge of the truth; that none should perish, but that all should come to repentance*; not doubting but his declared mind, and his secret Providence, although we cannot thoroughly discern or explain their consistency, do yet really and fully conspire. But no further at this time. 2 Pet. iii. 9.

^d Quæst. LXVIII. [Opp. Tom. vi. col. 54 c.]

SERMON LX.

THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION ASSERTED AND EXPLAINED.

I TIM. IV. 10.

*The living God; who is the Saviour of all men,
especially of those that believe.*

SERM.
LX.

7 **A**S our Saviour was such to all men by his doctrine, or the general discovery of all saving truth; so may he be esteemed such in regard to his exemplary practice; whereby upon the open stage of the world, and in the common view of all that would attend unto him, he did represent a living pattern of all goodness; by imitating which, we may certainly attain salvation. He that will consider his practice shall find it admirably fitted for general instruction and imitation; calculated for all places and all sorts of people; suited to the complexions, to the capacities, to the degrees, to the callings of all men; so that every sort of men may from it draw profitable direction, may in it find a copy, even of his particular behaviour: for he was a great Prince, illustrious in birth, excellent in glory, and abounding in all wealth; yet was born in obscurity, lived without pomp, and seemed to possess nothing; so teaching men of high rank to be sober, mild, and humble; not to rest in, not to regard much, not to hug and cling

to the accommodations and shows of worldly state; teaching those of mean degree to be patient, content, and cheerful in their station. He was exceedingly wise and knowing, without bound or measure; yet made no ostentation of extraordinary knowledge, of sharp wit, of deep subtlety; did not vent high, dark, or intricate notions; had in his practice no reaches and windings of craft or policy; but was in his doctrine very plain and intelligible, in his practice very open and clear; so that what he commonly said or did, not only philosophers and statesmen, but almost the simplest idiots might easily comprehend; so that those might thence learn not to be conceited of their superfluous wisdom; these not to be discouraged in their harmless ignorance; both having thence an equally sufficient instruction in all true righteousness, a complete direction in the paths to happiness, being thereby σοφίζόμενοι εἰς σωτηρίαν, *made wise and learned to salvation.* He did not immerse himself in the cares, nor engage himself into the businesses of this world; yet did not withdraw himself from the company and conversation of men: he retired often from the crowd, that he might converse with God and heavenly things; he put himself into it, that he might impart good to men, and benefit the world, declining no sort of society; but indifferently conversing with all; disputing with the doctors, and eating with the publicans; whence thereby both men of contemplative and quiet dispositions or vocations, and men of busy spirits, or of active lives, may be guided respectively; those not to be morose, supercilious, rigid, contemptuous toward other men; these not to be so possessed or

² Tim. iii.
15.

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entangled with the world, as not to reserve some leisure for the culture of their minds, not to employ some care upon the duty of piety and devotion; both may learn, whether in private retirements, or in public conversation and employment, especially to regard the service of God and the benefit of men: thus was the example of our Lord accommodated for all men; especially conducting them in the hardest and roughest parts of the way leading to bliss, the acclivities and asperities of duty; self-denial, or neglect of worldly glory and fleshly pleasure, patience, humility, general charity; shewing us the possibility of performing such duties, and encouraging us thereto. Through these difficult and dangerous passages (as a resolute *chieftain of life*, ἀρχηγὸς ζωῆς,) he undauntedly marched before us, charging, beating back, and breaking through all opposite forces, all enemies, all temptations, all obstacles; enduring painfully the most furious assaults of the world; boldly withstanding and happily conquering the most malicious rage of hell; so that victory and salvation we shall be certain of, if we pursue his steps, and do not basely (out of faintness or falsehood) desert so good a leader; we shall not fail of the unfading crown^a, if, *With patience we run the race that is set before us, looking unto the Captain and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus, who, for the joy proposed unto him, endured the cross, despised the shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.* Would it not raise and inflame any courage to see his commander to adventure so boldly upon all

1 Pet. ii.

21.

Heb. xii. 2.

1 Pet. v. 4.

^a Τὸν ἀμαράντινον τῆς δόξης στέφανον.—1 Pet. v. 4.

Τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς.—James i. 12; Rev. ii. 10.

hazards, to endure so willingly all hardships? SERM. LX.
 Whom would not the sight of such a *forerunner* Heb. vi. 20.
 (πρόδρομος) animate and quicken in his course; who, by running in the straight way of righteousness with alacrity and constancy, hath obtained himself a most glorious crown, and holdeth forth another like thereto, for the reward of those who follow him? Now as our Lord's doctrine, so did his example, in the nature and design thereof, respect and appertain to all men, it being also like the light of heaven, a common spectacle, a public guide, To Luke i. 79.
guide our steps into the way of peace: if it do not appear so, if it do not effectually direct all, it is by accident and beside God's intention; it is by the fault of them who should propound it, or of them who have not eyes fit or worthy to behold it; briefly, what was said concerning the universal revelation of Christian doctrine may be applied to Christ's practice.

8 Jesus is the Saviour of all men, as having combated and vanquished all the enemies of man's welfare and happiness; dispossessing them of all their pretences and usurpations over man, disarming them of all their power and force against him; enabling us to withstand and overcome them. Man's salvation hath many adversaries of different nature and kind; some directly oppugning it, some formally prejudicing it, some accidentally impeding it; some alluring, some forcing, some discouraging from it, or from the means conducing to it: the chief of them we may from the Scripture (with consent of experience) reckon to be the Devil, with all his envy and malice, his usurpations, his delusions, and his temptations to sin; the world, with

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its snares and baits, its violences, persecutions, and menaces; the flesh, or natural concupiscence, with its bad inclinations and propensities to evil, its lusts and pleasures; sin, with its guilt, and mischievous consequences; the law, with its rigorous exactions, hard measure, and harsh boding; conscience, with its accusations and complaints, its terrors and anguishes; Divine anger, with its effects, death and hell. All these our Lord hath in several and suitable ways defeated^b; as to their malignity, contrariety, or enmity in respect of man's salvation; *He hath*, as Zachariah prophesieth in his Benedictus, *saved us from our enemies, and from the hands of all that hate us: so that being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might safely and securely, ἀφόβως, without danger or fear, serve him, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.*

Matt. xiii.
28.

Luke xi.

19.

1 Pet. v. 8.

Rev. xii. 3,
&c.

Acts x. 38.

1 John ii.

14.

Rev. xii. 9.

John xii.

31; xiv. 30;

xvi. 11.

Eph. ii. 2;

vi. 12.

2 Cor. iv. 4.

Coloss. i.

13.

Acts xxvi.

18; x. 38.

2 Tim. ii.

26.

Heb. ii. 14.

Luke x. 18.

The Devil, (that enemy, that adversary, that accuser, that slanderer, that murderer, that greedy lion, that crafty serpent, the strong one, the mischievous one, the destroyer,) who usurped an authority and exercised a domination over mankind, as the prince of this world; who made prize of them, captivated them at his pleasure; who detained them under the power (or authority) of darkness and wickedness; who had the power of death; him our Saviour hath destroyed or defeated, (κατήργησεν, as the Apostle to the Hebrews speaketh; that is, abolished him as to any further pretence of empire or power over us;) him he hath dejected from heaven, (*I saw Satan like lightning*

^b Ὁ Χριστὸς οὐδὲν τῆς ἰδίας ποιήσεως προσκατέλιπε τῷ ἄρχοντι τοῦ κόσμου τούτου. — Athan. con. Apoll. Lib. i. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 935 B.]

falling down from heaven;) him he hath cast out: SERM. LX.
Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the
prince of this world be cast out: all his works he John xii. 31; xvi. 11.
 hath dissolved: *For this cause, saith St John, the* 1 John iii. 8.
Son of God did appear, that he might dissolve the
works of the Devil. He combated this strong one, Matt. xii. 29.
 (this mighty and dreadful foe of ours,) and baffled
 him, and bound him, and disarmed him, (taking
 away *τὴν πανοπλίαν αὐτοῦ*, the whole armour in Luke xi. 21, 22.
 which he trusted,) and spoiled him, (*τὰ σκεύη διήρ-* Matt. xii. 29.
πασε, rifled all his baggage, bare away all his in-
 struments of mischief,) and plundered all his house;
 leaving him unable (without our fault, our base-
 ness, our negligence) to do us mischief, (as is
 intimated in the 12th of St Matthew and 11th of
 St Luke;) yea, he triumphed over all those in- Coloss. ii. 15.
 fernal principalities and powers, and exposed them,
 as St Paul saith: he imparted to his disciples Luke x. 19.
 ability to trample upon all his power: by him all
 his followers are so fortified as to conquer the
 wicked one, as St John says: he affordeth light 1 John ii. 14.
 to discover all his wiles and snares, strength and Eph. vi. 11.
 courage to withstand all his assaults, to repel all 2 Cor. ii. 11.
 his fiery darts, to put him to flight. Eph. vi. 16.

The world also (that is, the wicked principles,
 the bad customs, the naughty conversation and ex- 1 Pet. v. 9.
 ample which commonly prevail here among men, Eph. iv. 27.
 alluring to evil and deterring from good; the cares James iv. 7.
 also, the riches, the pleasures, the glories of the
 world, which possess or distract the minds, satiate
 and cloy the desires, employ all the affections and
 endeavours, take up the time of men; all in the
 world which fasteneth our hearts to earth, and to
 these low transitory things; or which sinketh them

SERM. LX. down toward hell; and which detaineth them from soaring toward heaven) is an enemy, an irreconcilable enemy to our salvation; the friendship thereof being inconsistent with a friendship in us toward the God of our salvation; or in him toward us: for, *The friendship of the world is enmity with God*; and, *If any man love the world, the friendship of the Father is not in him*. And this enemy our Lord hath vanquished, and enabled us to overcome: *Be of good courage*, saith he, *I have overcome the world*: he, by a constant self-denial and temperance, defeated the bewitching pleasures and flattering glories of it; he, by an immoveable patience, baffled the terrible frowns and outrageous violences of it; he, by a resolute and invincible maintenance of truth, in great measure routed and dissipated the errors and oppositions thereof; he, by a general and intense charity, surmounted the provocations, envies, and enmities thereof; he did it himself for us, and he also enabled us to do it; furnishing us with sufficient strength, and fit weapons, whereby we may combat and conquer it; may sustain and repel its force; may shun and elude its baits; for, *Every one that* (by faith in him) *is born of God doth overcome the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he who believeth that *Jesus is the Son of God*? In all these things (that is, in whatever concerns the world and its enmity: *Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword,*) We are, saith St Paul, *more than conquerors through him that loved us*; *Thanks be to God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ*: our Lord hath procured for us

James iv. 4.

1 John ii.
15.John xvi.
33.1 John v.
4, 5.Rom. viii.
35, 37, 38,
39.2 Cor. ii.
14.

Phil. i. 28.

1 Cor. xv.
57.

hopes that will raise our minds and affections above the world; objects employing our care and endeavour far beyond it; satisfactions that will cheer our hearts, and satiate our desires without it; comforts that will support and sustain our spirits against all the terrors, all the assaults, all the evils thereof; by his means it is, that we have no reason either to love it, or to fear it, or to value it, or to be concerned about it; but to condemn it as a thing unworthy of us and below us.

The flesh also (that is, all that within us of bodily temper, or natural constitution, which inclineth and swayeth us to vicious excess in sensual enjoyments; which disposeth us to the inordinate love of ourselves, and of other creatures; which lusts against the spirit, and is adversary thereto; which blindeth and darkeneth our minds in the apprehension of our judgment concerning divine things; which perverteth and disableth (enfeebleth) our wills in the choice and prosecution of what is good; which discomposeth and disordereth the affections and passions of our soul; which continually enticeth and seduceth us to sin) is also an enemy; a very powerful, very treacherous, very dangerous, and very mischievous enemy to us and our welfare; rendering us enemies to God, (for, *The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, being another law in our members, warring against the law of our mind, and captivating us to the law of sin;*) engendering and fostering those *Fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;* whose works and fruits are all sorts of intemperance, impurity, pride, envy, contentiousness: this capital

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Gal. v. 24.

1 Cor. ii.

14.
Matt. xxvi.

41.
Gal. v. 17.

Rom. vii.
18, 19.
James i.
14.

Rom. viii.
7;
vii. 23.

1 Pet. ii.
11.
Gal. v. 19.
1 Cor. iii. 3.
Col. iii. 5.

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enemy of ours our Lord did in his own person first subdue, rejecting all the suggestions and thwarting the impulses thereof; entirely submitting to and performing the will of God; even in willingly drinking that cup, which was so distasteful, so grievous to natural will and fleshly desire. He so conquered the flesh in himself for us; he also conquers it in us, by the guidance and assistance of his grace enabling us to withstand it, and to overcome it. *The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus*, saith St Paul, *hath freed me from the law of sin and death*. He infuses a light discussing those fogs which stream from carnal sense and appetite; so that we may clearly discern divine truths, the will of God, the way to happiness: he inserteth principles of spiritual life and strength, counterpoising and overswaying corporeal and sensual propensions; so that we can restrain sensual desires, and compose irregular passions, and submit readily to God's will, and observe cheerfully God's law, and freely comply with the dictates of the Spirit, or of right reason; he so continually aideth, encourageth, and upholds us, that we can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth us; so that by his power and help the flesh with its affections and lusts are crucified; the earthly members are mortified; *The old man, which was corrupted according to deceitful lusts, is put off; The body of sin is so destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin; Sin doth not reign in our mortal bodies, so that we (must) obey it in the lusts thereof; We are renewed in the spirit of our minds; and do put on the new man, which is created according to God in righteousness and true holiness.*

Luke xxii.
42.
Matt. xxvi.
39.
John xvii.
19.
Heb. ii. 10.

Rom. viii.
2.

2 Cor. iv.
6.

1 Cor. ii.
15.
1 John ii.
27.
Eph. v. 8.
Rom. xii.
2.
1 John v.
3.
Phil. ii. 13;

iv. 13.
2 Cor. iii. 5.
Heb. xiii.
21.
Gal. v. 24.
Coloss. iii.
5; ii. 11.
Eph. iv. 22.
Rom. vi. 6,
12;
viii. 13.
Heb. xii. 1.

Eph. iv.
23; ii. 10.
Coloss. iii.
10.

Our sins also are very grievous enemies of ours^c, loading us with heavy guilt, stinging us with bitter remorse and anxious fear, keeping us under miserable bondage, exposing us to extreme mischief and misery; them our Lord hath also routed and vanquished: in regard to this performance was the name Jesus assigned to him; as the angel told Joseph: *She shall bear a son, and thou shalt call his name, Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins*: from their sins; taking in all the causes and the consequences of them; from all those spiritual enemies which draw us or drive us into them; from the guilt and obnoxiousness to punishment, the terror and anguish of conscience, the wrath and displeasure of God following upon them, the slavery under their dominion, the final condemnation and sufferance of grievous pains for them^d; the guilt of sin he particularly freed us from: for *He loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood*. Christ died for sinners, (for us then being sinners,) that is, that he might deliver us from our sins, with all their causes, adjuncts, and consequences: *He bare our sins in his own body on the tree; The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin; He is the propitiation for our sins, and for the sins of the whole world; He was manifested to take away our sins; Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin* (εἰς ἀθέτησιν ἁμαρτίας, to the abolition of sin) by the sacrifice of

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Matt. i. 21.
1 Tim. i.
15.

Rev. i. 5.
1 Pet. i. 19;

ii. 24;
iii. 18.

1 John i. 7;
ii. 2; iii. 5;
iv. 10.
Heb. i. 3;
ix. 26, 28.

^c Πρὸς τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἀνταγωνιζόμενοι.—Heb. xii. 4.

^d Ὁ Χριστὸς, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν, τῷ γένει τῶν ἀνθρώπων διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου πάθους πληρεστάτην ἀπέδωκε τὴν σωτηρίαν, ἵνα ὅλον τὸν ἄνθρωπον ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἐνεχόμενον πάσης ἁμαρτίας ἐλευθερώσῃ.—Damas. Epist. apud Theodor. Eccl. Hist. v. 10. [Opp. Tom. III. p. 719 B.]

SERM. LX. *himself; We are justified freely by God's grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; By his obedience many are constituted righteous, (or free from the guilt and imputation of sin;) He justifies the ungodly; covering their sins, and not imputing them unto them. So doth he wipe away the guilt of sin; and he voids the condemnation passed for them; for, There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus: Who is there that can condemn, since Christ hath died, or rather hath risen again?*

Rom. iii. 24; v. 19.
Rom. iv. 5, 6, 7;
viii. 1, 34;

He hath also appeased God's wrath for sin, and removed the effects of it, (the punishment and vengeance due to sin and threatened for it:) so that, *Being enemies we are reconciled to God by the death of his Son; Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: Jesus is he who delivereth us (ὁ ῥυόμενος) from the wrath to come; Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved by him from wrath.*

v. 10, 1.
I Thess. i. 10.
Rom. v. 9;

The strength and dominion of sin he hath also broken, by the grace afforded us, whereby we are able to resist and avoid it: so that *Sin henceforth shall not domineer over us, or reign in our mortal body: Being freed from sin, we are enslaved to righteousness, and made servants to God: The body of sin is destroyed, so that we no longer serve sin.* Whence consequently he hath subdued, utterly weakened, or quite destroyed (as to any force or mischievous influence upon us) those other adversaries, which depend upon sin, and by its power oppose and afflict us.

vi. 14, 12, 18, 22, 6.

Our conscience is such an enemy accusing us, condemning us, vexing us with the memory and

sense of sin ; suggesting to us the depth of our guilt, and the danger of our state, terrifying us with the expectation of punishment and vengeance : but our Lord (by securing us of mercy and favour upon repentance and sincere obedience) hath silenced and stilled this adversary ; *Hath by his blood*, as the Apostle to the Hebrews says, *purged our conscience from dead works* : *Hath delivered them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage* ; so that thence we obtain a steady peace of mind, a joyful satisfaction in the service of God, a comfortable hope of future bliss : peace, comfort, and joy are the adjuncts of that state he shall put us into, and the fruits of that Spirit he bestoweth on us.

The Law also (in its rigour, as requiring exact obedience, and as denouncing vengeance to them who in any point violate it) is, by reason of our weakness and inability so perfectly to observe it, an enemy to us ; justifying no man, perfecting no man, causing, increasing, aggravating, quickening, declaring sin ; yielding occasion to sin of killing us, working wrath, ministering death and condemnation, subjecting us to a curse, as St Paul teacheth us : but our Lord, by mitigating and abating the extreme rigour thereof, by procuring an acceptance of sincere (though not accurate) obedience, by purchasing and dispensing pardon for transgression thereof upon repentance, by conferring competent strength and ability to perform it in an acceptable degree, hath brought under this adversary ; hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law ; hath justified and imputed righteousness to us without the works of the Law, (without

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Heb. ix.
14;

ii. 15.

Rom. xv.
13; xiv. 17.
Gal. v. 22;
ii. 16;
iii. 11.
Heb. vii.
19.

Rom. x. 5;
viii. 3.
Gal. iii. 12;
v. 3.
Rom. vii.
13; iv. 15;
iii. 20;
v. 20;
vii. 7, 8,
10, 11;
1 Cor. xv.
56.
2 Cor. iii.
7, 9.

Gal. iii. 13.
Rom. iii.
21, 28.

SERM. LX. such punctual performances as the Law exacts :)

Rom. iv. 6;
vii. 6, 4;
vi. 14.
Gal. v. 18.

we are delivered from the Law, (as to those effects of it; the condemning, discouraging, enslaving us,) we cease to be under the Law, (in those respects,) being under grace, being led by the Spirit, as St Paul tells us. The Law, indeed, is still our rule, our guide, our governor; we are obliged to follow and obey it: but it ceases to be a tyrant over us, a tormentor of us.

I Cor. xv.
26.

Death is also an enemy, (*The last enemy*, saith St Paul, *which shall be destroyed, is death*,) the enemy, which naturally we most fear and abominate; that which would utterly destroy us.

Acts ii. 24.

I Cor. xv.
20.

Acts xxvi.

23.

Col. i. 18.

Rev. i. 5.

Acts iii.

15.

2 Tim. i.

10.

Heb. ii.

14, 15.

Rom. vi.

23.

This enemy our Lord hath vanquished and destroyed: by his death and resurrection he opened the way to a happy immortality; *He abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel: He by his death defeated him that had the power of death; and delivered them, who by fear of death were through their whole life subject to bondage*; he pulled out sin, which is the sting of death, and reversed the sentence of condemnation, to which we all stood obnoxious. *The wages of sin* (that which we had deserved, and was by law due to us for it) *was death; but the gift of God is everlasting life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Lastly, Hell (that is, utter darkness, extreme discomfort, intolerable and endless misery,) the most dismal of all enemies, our Lord hath, by the virtue of his merits, and the power of his grace, put us into a capacity of avoiding; *He hath*, as St Paul before told us, *delivered us from the wrath to come. O hell, where is thy victory? Death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire.*

I Thess. i.

10.

I Cor. xv.

55.

Rev. xx.

14.

Thus hath our Lord in our behalf vanquished and defeated every thing that is opposite or prejudicial to our salvation and welfare. Many, indeed, of these things do in a more immediate, more peculiar, and more signal manner concern the faithful members of the Christian Church, and are directly applied to them; yet all of them in some sort, according to God's design, and in respect to a remote capacity, may be referred to all men. They are benefits which God intended for all men, and which all men (if they be not faulty and wanting to themselves) may obtain. How they more especially appertain to the faithful, we may shew afterward.

Application.—1 Hence ariseth great matter and cause of glorifying God; both from the thing itself and its extent; for the magnitude of beneficence is to be estimated, not only according to the degree of quality, but according to its amplitude of object: to redeem any doth signify goodness, to redeem many doth increase it, to redeem all doth advance it to the highest pitch; the more are obliged, the greater is the glory due to the benefactor.

Hence the earth being full of the goodness of the Lord, the Lord being gracious unto all, and his mercy being over all his works, all creatures partaking of God's bounty, is so often insisted upon in those divine hymns, as a ground of praise to God.

Ps. xxxiii.
5;
cxlv. 9.

Some do, indeed, speak of glorifying God for his discriminating grace, as if grace, the narrower it were, the better it were: but is not selfishness

SERM.
LX.Matt. xx.
11, 15.

and envy at the bottom of this? Is not this the disposition of those in the Gospel, who murmured — *Is thine eye evil because mine is good?*

It is dangerous to restrain God's benevolence and beneficence within bounds narrower than they really are; thereby diminishing his glory.

Rev. v. 9.
Eph. i. 6.
Col. i. 12.

2 Hereby is discovered the general obligation of men to love God; to praise him, to serve him in sense of his goodness, in regard to his beneficence, out of gratitude toward him. If God hath been so kindly affected toward men, and so careful of their welfare, as, for procuring and promoting their salvation, to provide a Saviour for them, to design his own beloved Son to that performance, in prosecution thereof depressing him into so low a state, exposing him to such inconveniences and indignities, such crosses and afflictions, how much, then, are all men obliged to love him, as their gracious friend and benefactor; to praise and celebrate him for his favour and mercy, to render all blessings and thanks unto him! This certainly is the duty of all, if the redemption in God's design reach to all; otherwise, in reality, it lieth on few, in practice it could scarce touch any. They cannot be obliged to thank God for their redemption, who are not obliged to him for the thing itself; they cannot heartily resent the kindness, who are not assured that it extends to them: and to such assurance (according to the doctrine of particular redemption) it is certain that very few men, especially of the best men, can arrive; it is a question whether any men arrive thereto.

According to the sense of all men, it is also no

easy thing to know certainly, whether a man at present be in the state of grace: and he that doth not know that, cannot (except upon the score of general redemption) be assured that he is redeemed; and therefore cannot thank God.

It hath been the common doctrine of Christendom for fifteen hundred years together, that no man (without a special revelation) can in this life be assured of his perseverance, and consequently not of his salvation; and consequently not of his election or redemption, in case only they who are saved are in the design of God redeemed: no man therefore, without that special revelation, can thank God heartily for his redemption, as being uncertain thereof, it being a secret reserved in God's breast.

It is yet a further difficulty, supposing a man to have a good assurance of his present state, to be assured of his final perseverance in it: which he that hath not, cannot (except upon the said score) thank God for it.

The best men especially, who, out of modesty and humility, are apt to doubt of their present state; who studying their hearts, and discovering many imperfections in themselves; who, reflecting on their lives, and observing in them many defects, are apt to question whether they are qualified for God's favour, or fitted for the future account and enjoyment of heaven; who, considering the treachery of their hearts, the feebleness of their reason, the unsteadiness of their resolution, will be apt to fear they may fall away, will be rendered hence incapable to give God thanks for their redemption: only the bold and blind bayards (who usually

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out of self-conceit are so exceedingly confident of their election and salvation) will be able to praise God for it.

Hence the assurance of salvation happening to few, and of them to much fewer upon good grounds; it being necessary to none, it being perhaps (yet far more probably, according to the general sense of Christendom) groundless to any; few or none are capable to render God praise and thanks for it: so shall he lose in effect all thanks for the greatest benefit he did ever confer on mankind.

It is therefore a dangerous opinion, which checketh their gratitude, which stoppeth their mouths from praising God, which so depriveth God of his due praise. It is much more safe to praise God for the benefits we conceive we have, but have not, than to neglect to praise him for that we have.

3 This doctrine doth afford great matter of comfort. If a man, reflecting on his own heart and ways (observing in them many blemishes and defects), is apt to be discouraged, yet it will raise him to consider, that he is not thereby excluded from a possibility of salvation, seeing he is assured of God's favourable inclination, who hath expressed so much good-will and favour toward him in his redemption; seeing he is persuaded, that he hath a Saviour so kindly and pitifully affected toward him; who wisheth him well; who is concerned in his salvation, that he might not be crossed or defeated in his designs, that he might not lose the effects of his endeavours, the price of his blood. But he that seeth himself in so doubtful a condition, as to his own qualifications, and withal

hath no assurance, that God was ever graciously disposed toward him, cannot but thereby be much discouraged. SERM.
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This doctrine therefore is safe and useful; it can do no man harm; it may do him great good, by giving him hopes of being assisted and accepted by his Redeemer. But the other is dangerous, as tending to discourage and deject men.

4 This doctrine is a great incitement to the performance of duty; both as working upon men's ingenuity, and disposing them in gratitude to serve God, from the resentment of their obligation for so great a favour; and as assuring them of acceptance in case of endeavour to obey. How can he but be moved willingly to serve God, who hath an apprehension of God's such merciful design to save him? of his having done so much in order thereto?

But how can he be moved to serve God in consideration of such a benefit, who is ignorant of its being intended him? How can any man apply himself cheerfully to serve that master, whose favourable inclination toward him, whose readiness to accept his service, he doubteth of?

The Apostles propound it as a ground of gratitude, and an obligation to the performance of duty, that they are redeemed by Christ; which supposeth they do all know and believe it. 1 Cor. vi.
20.
1 Pet. i.
17.

Supposing Christ is not the Redeemer of all, but of those only who shall be finally saved, these grounds of thankfulness and enforcements of duty cannot properly or pertinently respect all Christians, and, indeed, only those who are sure of their salvation.

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My thanking Christ for his redeeming me, my diligently serving him as my Redeemer, supposeth my opinion, and is gounded upon the truth of his being really so:—I cannot heartily, confidently, or comfortably do it, except I know it, and am assured thereof; which I cannot do, except Christ died for all men, or that I am assured of my particular election.

So that either Christ is an universal Saviour, or the greatest part of Christians are disobliged and incapacitated reasonably to thank him, to praise him, to serve him, as they are enjoined to do.

5 It is a great aggravation of infidelity, of apostasy, of all disobedience, that they who are guilty of them, do frustrate the designs and undertakings of Christ, do reject the overtures of his grace, do abuse the goodness and mercy of their Redeemer; it consequently deterreth from those things.

Luke vii.
30.

The Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God toward them; (God therefore designed their good.)

Heb. ii. 3.

How shall we escape, that neglect so great salvation? A salvation which they were capable of, which was designed for them, which was offered to them; otherwise there would have been no danger in neglecting it, no fault in doing it.

Acts xiii.
26;

It is said of the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia, that they did ἀπωθεῖσθαι, *thrust away* the Gospel, (the word of salvation, that was sent them,) judging themselves unworthy of eternal life: God did think fit out of goodness seriously to offer it to them, but they did not think fit to embrace it.

ver. 46.

Rom. ii. 4. *Despisest thou the riches of God's goodness?*

How can any man despise that which doth not concern him, which never was offered him, which at least he hath no ground of confidence that it extendeth to him? SERM.
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2 Pet. iii. 9.

These things I speak that ye may be saved: so our Lord saith to those who did not believe in him. John v.
34, 38.

How often have I willed, &c. Matt. xxiii.
37.

Denying the Lord that bought them. 2 Pet. ii. 1.

6 It is a great encouragement and excitement to devotion. Who can be backward of having recourse to his Redeemer, or of using his mediation? Whom will not such an experiment of goodness invite and encourage?

But the contrary apprehension must needs damp devotion, and discourage from it. He can apply himself to God but faintly and distrustfully, who distrusteth whether he hath any Redeemer or Mediator, or no; who must thus conceive and say to himself: Perhaps God hath loved me, and perhaps he never had, nor will have any regard to my welfare: perhaps Christ died with intention to do me good: perhaps he never did mean any such thing: perhaps those expressions of kindness sounding so generally do not include me: perhaps I am excluded, and only deluded by them. When a man cannot say to Christ, O my Saviour!—O my Mediator! &c. nor use his intercession with God for the procurement of faith, of grace, of any good thing.

7 It is a ground and motive of charity; there arising thence a more considerable relation between all men; being all the objects of Christ's love and

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mercy should endear men to one another; it rendereth every man valuable in our eyes, as dear and precious in God's sight. It should make his salvation desirable to us.

1 Tim. ii. 1.

Pray for all men, saith St Paul.

The contrary opinion removeth this ground of charity; and so cooleth it.

Rom. xiv.
15.

8 It should consequently render us careful to promote the salvation of others, and fearful to hinder it by ill example, by ill doctrine, by any misbehaviour. So doth St Paul argue, when he saith, *Destroyest thou him for whom Christ died?*

9 It is a piece of justice to acknowledge the right and interest of every man in his Saviour.

A wrong to exclude any; to confine and appropriate this great blessing; to engross, to inclose a common; to restrain that by forging distinctions, which is so unlimitedly expressed.

The undertakings and performances of our Saviour did respect all men, as the common works of nature do; as the air we breathe in, as the sun which shineth on us; the which are not given to any man particularly, but to all generally; not as a proper inclosure, but as a common—they are indeed mine, but not otherwise, than as they do belong to all men.

A gift they are to all equally, though they do not prove to all a blessing; there being no common gift, which by the refusal, neglect, or ill use of it may not prove a curse—a savour of death.

SERMON LXI.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD, TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY.

LUKE II. 10.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people^a.

THE proper business of a festival is spiritual joy, conceived in our hearts by reflection on some notable blessing conferred on us; accompanied with a grateful sense and expression, answerable to the special bounty and mercy of God, in due proportion to the nature and degree of that blessing. SERM.
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Such joy is a duty, or a part of religious devotion, required by God, and very acceptable to him: for as God would have his servants perpetually content, well satisfied, and cheerful in all states, and upon all occurrences; so he doth especially demand from us, that we should entertain his favours with delight and complacence; it being proper, it being seemly, it being just, so to do: for since joy is a natural result of our obtaining whatever we do apprehend good, or esteem and affect; the conception of it is a plain argument, that we do well understand, do rightly prize, do cordially like, do thankfully embrace God's favours; as, on the contrary, a defect of it doth imply, that we do

^a Ἰδοὺ γὰρ, εὐαγγελίζομαι ὑμῖν χαρὰν μεγάλην, ἥτις ἔσται παντὶ τῷ λαῷ.

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not mind them, or take them to be little worth, that we do not sensibly relish them, or accept them kindly. And if ever we are obliged, if ever we are concerned so to rejoice, then surely it is now; when the fairest occasion and highest cause of joy that ever was is presented to us; when certain news from heaven, and the best that ever came from thence, of the most admirable, the most glorious, the most beneficial event, that ever happened in the world, is in a manner suitably rare conveyed to us; for, *Behold*, saith the Angel, *I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*

Upon which words (each whereof is emphatical, and pregnant with matter observable) we shall first make a brief descant, or paraphrase, supplying the room of a curious analysis; then we shall urge the main duty couched in them.

Ἰδοὺ, Behold: This is a word denoting admiration, exciting attention, intimating assurance: Behold, and admire; it is no mean, no ordinary matter, that I report, but a most remarkable, a very marvellous event: Behold, and attend; it is a business not to be passed over with small regard, but most worthy your consideration, of high moment and concernment to you. Behold, and see; it is no uncertain, no obscure thing; but that whereof you may be fully assured, as if it were most evident to your sense, and which by conspicuous proofs shall be demonstrated; in the meanwhile you have no slight authority for it: for

Εὐαγγελίζομαι, I bring good tidings: I, an Angel, a special messenger of God purposely sent on this errand, that by the strangeness of my apparition I may excite you to regard it, by the weight of my

testimony I may incline you to believe it, by the dignity of my nature I may declare the importance of it; I, a faithful servant of God, and a kind friend to men, very willing at his command to perform good offices to them, do bring a message well becoming an angel's mouth, worth my descent from heaven, and putting on this visible shape: for

Εὐαγγελίζομαι χαρὰν μεγάλην, I bring good tidings of great joy: I bring tidings that may gratify the curiosity of any man, the mind of man naturally being greedy of news: good tidings; those are welcome to all men, and apt to yield more pleasure than any knowledge we had before: tidings of joy; such as may not only minister a dry satisfaction to your reason, but sensibly touch your affections, by the comfortable nature and beneficial tendency of them: tidings of great joy; as not touching any indifferent or petty business, but affairs of nearest concernment and highest consequence to you: (such, indeed, as you shall understand, which do concern not the poor interests of this world, not the sorry pleasures of sense, not any slender advantage of your present life and temporal state; but your spiritual welfare, your everlasting condition, the future joy and happiness of your souls;) tidings, indeed, the most gladsome that ever sounded upon earth, that ever entered into mortal ear: these I bring

Ὑμῖν, to you: to you shepherds; persons of mean condition and simple capacity, leading this innocent and humble sort of life, employed in your honest vocation, undergoing toilsome labour and sore hardship; witness the open field, witness the cold season, witness the dark night, in which I find

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Luke ii. 8.

you watching and guarding your sheep; to you, who could expect no very welcome tidings; who are little concerned in any great transactions, and can have small ambition or hope of bettering your condition by any changes here; even to you^b (not in the first place to the mighty Princes, to the crafty Statesmen, to the sage Philosophers, or learned Rabbies, to the wealthy merchants, or fine citizens, who now are warm in their houses, enjoying their ease and pleasure; reposing on their beds, or sitting by their fires, or revelling at their banquets and sports; but to you) poor, harmless, silly, industrious souls, who well may represent the greater and better part of mankind; in this surprising and absolutely free way the gracious Lord of heaven by me his special minister doth vouchsafe to send from thence tidings of great joy: which shall be

Matt. xv.

24; x. 6.

Rom. ix. 4.

Luke xxiv.

47.

Acts xiii.

46.

Isai. ii. 3.

Zech. ix. 9.

Rom. ix. 4.

Παντὶ τῷ λαῷ, *to all people*; or rather *to all the people*; that is, to God's ancient and peculiar people, in regard to which it is said, *I was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*; to that people, I say, especially, primarily, and more immediately this joy did appertain; it, by a closer relation to God, and special interest in his promises, having plainest title thereto; it, from anticipations of knowledge, faith, and hope, being more capable to admit such an overture; it, indeed, being the representative of all the spiritual Israel, or faithful seed of Abraham, for whom the benefits which these tidings import were designed; to it first, indeed, but mediately and consequentially to all people dispersed on the face of the earth. The ex-

^b Pauperibus atque laborantibus, non vobis divitibus, &c — Bern. in Nativ. Dom. Serm. v. [Opp. Tom. i. col. 1763 A.]

pression seemeth adapted to the present conceits of that nation, which apprehended nothing about God's favourable intentions to the community of men: but, in effect, it is to be understood extensively in reference to all people: for the Saviour, the Christ, the Lord, of whom this good news did report, was not only to be the Redeemer and Governor of that small people, but of the world, of every nation, of all mankind: here, indeed, we have παντὶ τῷ λαῷ, *to all the people*; but in the *Nunc dimittis* of old Simeon we have πάντων τῶν λαῶν, *of all the peoples*: Mine eyes, said he, have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all the peoples; As he was the Glory of his people Israel; as in him God did visit and redeem that his people; so he was made a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be for salvation to the uttermost ends of the earth: he was the Expectation of Israel; but he was likewise the Desire of all nations: he was destined to rule in Sion; but the Heathen also were given for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession: he was the Root of Jesse, which should stand for an ensign of the people, to which the Gentiles should seek; he was that royal Person of whom the Psalmist did sing, Men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed.

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Luke ii. 31;

ii. 30;

ii. 32;

i. 68.
Acts xiii.

47.
Isai. xlix.

6; xlii. 6.
Luke ii.

38.

Hag. ii. 7.

Ps. ii. 8.
Mic. v. 2.

Isai. xi. 10.

Ps. lxxii.
17.

He was to be born by nation a Jew, but a man by nature; the Son of man was a style which he commonly did own and affect, no less than the Son of Abraham, or of David; he was born indeed under the law, but of a woman; and therefore brother to us all, as partaker of the same flesh and blood: hence he was endued with an human compassion

Matt. i. 1.

Gal. iv. 4.

Heb. ii. 14.

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and with a fraternal affection toward all men; hence was he disposed to extend the benefit of his charitable and gracious performances unto them all.

Judæa therefore must not engross this angelical Gospel; it is of importance most universal and unlimited, reaching through all successions of time, and all extensions of place; filling all ages and all regions of the world with matter and with obligation of joy: hence even by Moses anciently (according to St Paul's interpretation) were all nations upon this account invited to a common joy; *Rejoice*, said he, *O ye nations with his people*. Hence, in foresight of this event, the holy Psalmist (as the Fathers expound him^c) did sing, *The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof*: hence, *Sing, O thou barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child—The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose—Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth*, said the evangelical Prophet in regard to this dispensation; in fine, this Angel himself did interpret his own words, when in concert with the heavenly choir he sang that anthem, *Glory be to God in the highest; on earth peace; and goodwill toward men*: whence we may collect, that a peace diffused over the earth, and a good-will extended toward all men, were implied in these tidings of great joy to all people.

Rom. xv.
10.
Deut.
xxxii. 43.

Ps. xcvi. 1;
xcvii. 1;

Isai. liv. 1;

xxxv. 1;

xlii. 10.

Luke ii. 14.

^c Τὴν προτέραν τοῦ σωτῆρος ἐπιφάνειαν προλέγει.—Theodor. [in Ps. xcvi. Opp. Tom. i. p. 785 c.]

Totum ad Christum revocemus, si volumus iter rectæ intelligentiæ tenere.—Aug. in Ps. xcvi. 2. [Opp. Tom. iv. col. 1041 B.]

We then are all concerned in these tidings, and we may look on them as by this heavenly Evangelist imparted to us; whence our duty must be to listen with reverent attention unto them, seriously to weigh the purport of them, diligently to contemplate the reasons of that great joy, which effectually should be produced in us by them, as their proper and due result; to further which practice, let us take some prospect of this Gospel, whereby it may appear pleasant, and apt to kindle a sprightly joy in our hearts. The matter of it is the nativity of our ever blessed Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus; for, *To you, saith our angel, is born this day a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;* an occurrence fraught with all the greatest causes of joy imaginable; as importing innumerable, unexpressibly and unconceivably vast advantages thence springing to us. SERM.
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It doth minister occasion of rejoicing for all the blessings which did flow from each of his salutary undertakings and performances; for all the mercies purchased by the merits of his obedience, and by the price of his blood; for all the graces issuing from his dispensation of the Holy Spirit; for all the benefits consequent on his illustrious resurrection, ascension, and glorification; as being a good entrance to them, yea, a great progress in them, and a certain pledge of their full accomplishment: for all the work of our redemption was in a manner achieved, when our Saviour did appear; his incarnation was the great step toward it, as being an act of the humblest obedience, and of the highest merit, that could anywise be performed, for satisfying the justice of God, and winning his favour toward us. His taking up life may well seem more

SERM. meritorious than his laying it down, and the chief
 LXI. passion which he could ever undergo; his death
 John x. 18. was a passion, great as death could be; his life
 also was a continual passion, or exercise of huge
 patience: but his birth seemeth to be the greatest
 and strangest passion of all; involving the lowest
 submission and the deepest suffering. What nobler
 sacrifice could there be, than God's offering himself
 up to mortality, to infirmity, to slavery? What
 obedience can be thought of comparable to that
 Heb. x. 7. which he did express, when he said, *Lo, I come to
 do thy will, O God: I came down, not that I might
 do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.*
 John vi. 38. For him to descend from heaven, the region of
 light and bliss, into this gloomy and sad world;
 for him in a manner to divest himself of celestial
 majesty, and to assume the form of a servant; for
 him to be enclosed in a womb, and to come out
 wailing thence, to suck at a breast for life, to be
 carried in arms, and laid in a manger, to enter on
 a stage of being so very low and homely; for him,
 Phil. ii. 7, I say, the Lord of glory, thus to empty and abase
 8. himself^d; may not this reasonably be deemed more
 than, after his becoming man, to sustain all the
 grievances incident to our nature and state? Whence
*The very assumption of flesh was, saith St Atha-
 nasius, the redemption of all mankind*^e. He was

^d 'Εαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν—ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτόν.—Phil. ii. 7, 8.

^e 'Ἡ πρόσληψις τῆς σαρκὸς ἐλευθέρωσις ἡν πάσης τῆς
 ἀνθρωπότητος.—Athan. con. Arian. Orat. II. [Opp. Tom. I. p. 482 B.]

Vid. con. Apoll. Lib. I. [Tom. I. p. 926 A.]

Λύχνον ἤψε τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σάρκα, &c.—Greg. Naz. Or. XXXVIII.
 [Opp. Tom. I. p. 672 C.]

Creatoris ad creaturam descensio, credentium est ad æterna pro-
 vectio.—Leo M. de Nat. Sermon. v. [Opp. Tom. I. col. 85.]

at least thence engaged in the way of acting and suffering whatever was needful for our recovery; and having gone so far, assuredly he never would flinch or recoil, but would go through with all; being come, he would shew himself come to purpose, leaving no part unfinished of his grand design.

So that as they, who celebrate the birth of a Prince, do mean thereby to express their joy for all the good, which they do hopefully presume to enjoy from his protection and conduct afterward in all his life; and as they, who welcome the sun-rising, do imply their satisfaction in the conveniences of his light through the whole ensuing day; so may the nativity of our Lord afford matter of rejoicing for all the train of mighty blessings which do succeed it. We may therefore now well consider him born to instruct us by his excellent doctrine, and to guide us by his perfect example; born to merit God's mercy and favour toward us, by an entire submission to God's pleasure in the whole conduct of his life, and in the final resignation of it; born to renew and sanctify our nature, to support and strengthen us in obedience to God's commandments, to succour us in temptations, to comfort us in distresses by his grace; born to rear himself from the grave for confirming our faith, and ensuring our hopes of salvation; born to ascend up above all the heavens to God's right hand, there effectually to intercede for us, thence liberally to dispense all heavenly blessings to us. Well may we now rejoice, as seeing him come to disclose the way of happiness, to establish the covenant of grace, to void all the obstructions, and subdue all the enemies to our welfare: well may we celebrate this

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birth, as by its virtue blessing the patriarchs, enlightening the prophets, inspiring the martyrs with faith and courage, enduing all the saints, that ever have been, with grace, and crowning them with glory; so that in this day we have the passion, the *pasch*, the ascension, the pentecost, the memorials of every saint suggested to us^f; the joys of all our festivals do conspire or commence in this; which is the head and spring, which is the fruitful seed, which is the hopeful morning of them all. Πάντα ταῦτα τῆς παρούσης ἡμέρας χάρις ἐστίν· αὕτη γὰρ ἤρξε τῶν ἐφεξῆς ἀγαθῶν; *All these things, saith St Gregory Nyssen, are the grace of this present day, for it began the goods which did in order succeed*^g.

But waving the numberless benefits so consequent on the Nativity, we shall only touch some of those which have a more formal and close relation thereto.

I pass over the contemplation of that sweet harmony between the old and the new world; in which, to our comfortable satisfaction, the sweetest attributes of God (his goodness, his wisdom, his fidelity and constancy) do illustrate themselves, by completion of the ancient promises, prefigurations, and predictions touching this event.

I forbear also to reflect on the happy alteration and amendment of the world, which our Lord's coming did induce, by comparing the state of things before it with that which followed it; the consideration of which case is very pleasant, and productive of joy. First then,

^f Οὐκοῦν καὶ τὰ τοῦ Πάσχα καλὰ, τῶν περὶ τὴν γένεσιν εὐφημιῶν, μέρος ἐστι.—Greg. Nyss. [In Diem Nat. Christ. Orat. Opp. Tom. II. p. 784 D.]

^g Id. ibid.

I Let us consider, that the Nativity doth import the completion of many ancient promises, predictions, and prefigurations concerning it; that whereas all former dispensations of favour and mercy were as preludes or preambles to this; the old Law did aim to represent it in its mysterious pomps; the chief of providential occurrences did intimate it; the Prophets often in their mystical raptures did allude to it, and often in clear terms did express it^h; the gracious designs of God, and the longing expectations of mankind being so variously implied in regard thereto; now all is come to be fulfilled, and perfected in most clear, most effectual, most substantial accomplishment; now is sprung up that *Seed of the woman*, which, according to the first Gospel preached to Adam, should *bruise the serpent's head*; now is the mystical Isaac, the miraculous Son of promise, born; now is that grant to Abraham, *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*, made good; now is *Shiloh* come, of whom Jacob forboded, *unto him the gatherings of the people shall be*; now is that oracle of Moses more than verified, *A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like to me; him shall ye hear*; now *The Star is come out of Jacob*, the vision whereof dazzled Balaam, and stopped him from cursing that people, in which it should arise; now is that oath discharged to David, *Of the fruit of thy body will*

Gen. iii. 15;
xxii. 18.
Gal. iii. 8,
16.
Gen. xlix.
10.
Deut. xviii.
15.
Acts iii. 22;
vii. 37.
Num. xxiv.
17.
Ps. cxxxii.
11.
Luke i. 33.

^h Sapiëntia vero et benignitas Dei hac salutiferi operis mora, capaciores nos suæ vocationis effecit: ut quod multis signis, multis vocibus, multisque mysteriis per tot fuerat secula prænunciatum, in his diebus Evangelii non esset ambiguum, &c.—P. Leo. i. de Nat. Serm. III. [Opp. Tom. i. col. 76.]

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Isai. xi. 1;
vii. 14; ix.
6; lix. 20.
Rom. xi.
26.
Jer. xxiii.
5;
xxxiii. 15.
Zech. iii. 8;
vi. 12.
Ezek.
xxxiv. 23;
xxxvii. 24.
Dan. vii.
13.
Mic. v. 2.
Matt. ii. 6.
Hag. ii. 7.
Mal. iii. 1;
iv. 2.

Ps. ii. 6;
xlv. 6;
lxxii. 11.
Acts xv.
16.
Amos ix.
11.
Luke i. 33.
Dan. vii.
13.
Mic. iv. 7.

I set upon thy throne; now those illustrious predictions of Isaiah, There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse—A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son—To us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be on his shoulders—There shall come out of Sion the deliverer, and shall turn ungodliness from Jacob, are fully accomplished; now The righteous Branch, of which Jeremiah and Zechariah spake, is sprouted forth; and Ezekiel's One Shepherd, Daniel's Son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven; Micah's Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from old; Haggai's Desire of all nations; Malachi's Angel of the covenant, and Sun of righteousness, have all in truth appeared: now is that glorious King and Captain arrived, whom the holy oracles do so magnificently describe; whom Moses and Joshua, whom David and Solomon in so many past circumstances did foreshadow; whom God would set upon his holy hill of Sion; The sceptre of whose kingdom is a mighty sceptre; Who should raise the tabernacle of David that is fallen; Before whom all kings should fall down, and whom all nations should serve; Who should reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of whose kingdom there shall be no end.

Now what can be more delightful, or satisfactory to our mind, than to reflect on this sweet harmony of things, this goodly correspondence between the old and new world; wherein so pregnant evidences of God's chief attributes, (of his goodness, of his wisdom, of his fidelity and constancy,) all conspiring to our benefit, do shine? Is it not pleasant to contemplate how provident God hath ever been for our welfare? what trains from the

world's beginning, or ever since our unhappy fall, he hath been laying to repair and restore us? how wisely he hath ordered all dispensations with a convenient reference and tendency to this masterpiece of graceⁱ? how steady he hath been in prosecuting his designs, and how faithful in accomplishing his promises concerning it?

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If the holy patriarchs did see this day, and were glad; if a glimpse thereof did cause their hearts to leap within them; if its very dawn had on the spirits of the Prophets so vigorous an influence^k, what comfort and complacence should we feel in this its real presence, and bright aspect on us! How sensibly should we be affected with this our happy advantage above them; the which our Lord himself then did teach us to estimate duly, when he said, *Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear: for verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.*

John viii.
56.

Matt. xiii.
16, 17.

2 Let us consider what alteration our Lord's coming did induce, by comparing the state of things before it to that which followed it. The old world then consisting of two parts, severed by a strong wall of partition, made up of difference in opinion, in practice, in affection, together with

Eph. ii. 14.

ⁱ Non itaque novo consilio Deus rebus humanis, nec sera miseratione consuluit; sed a constitutione mundi unam eandemque omnibus causam salutis instituit.—P. Leo. i. de Nat. Serm. iii. [Opp. Tom. i. col. 76.]

^k Magnam enim jucunditatem tunc carpebant ipsi sancti Prophetæ, cum ea videbant in spiritu, non jam impleta, sed adhuc futura.—Aug. in Ps. xcvi. [Opp. Tom. iv. col. 1040 E.]

SERM. LXI. a strict prohibition to one of holding intercourse with the other.

Acts x. 28.

Of one, and that far the greater part, St Paul hath given us these descriptions and characters:

Eph. ii. 12;

They were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant, having no hope,

ii. 3;

and being without God in the world; They were by nature the children of wrath and of disobedience;

ii. 1, 2;

They were dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of this world, according to

iv. 17, 18, 19;

the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience; They did walk in the vanity of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the

life of God through the ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their heart; and being

past feeling, did give themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness;

ii. 3.

They had their conversation in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind;

Tit. iii. 3.

Being foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hate-

Col. iii. 7.

Eph. v. 8.

Col. ii. 13.

1 Cor. vi.

11.

2 Cor. iv.

4.

1 Thess. iv.

5.

1 Pet. iv.

3.

ful, and hating one another. Such was the case, the dismally wretched case, of the Gentile world;

such were our forefathers, (such after them of course, by fatal consequence, should we have been;)

they were in their minds blinded with gross ignorance, and deluded with foul errors; they were in

their wills and affections corrupted with great disorder, perverseness, sensuality, malice; they did

in their conversation practise all sorts of impiety, iniquity, and impurity; their conceptions of God

Gal. iv. 8.

Rom. i. 29.

were very unworthy, and their worship answerably such; (full of sottish, savage, beastly superstitions;)

their principles were vain, and their life conformably dissolute; in short, they lived under the domination and influence of wicked spirits, who thence are styled *Lords and Princes of this world, of this air, of this secular darkness*: even of the wisest among them, (the number of whom, notwithstanding the clatter their writings made, was very small and inconsiderable,) of those who by the conduct of natural light strove to disengage themselves from vulgar mistakes and miscarriages, the case was little better; for even their minds (after all their studious disquisitions and debates) proved dark and giddy; full of ignorance, of error, of doubt in regard to the main points of Religion and of morality; some of them flatly denying the existence, or (which in effect is the same) the providence of God; the natural distinction between good and evil, the spiritual nature and future subsistence of our souls, the dispensation of rewards and punishments after this life; others wavering in doubt, or having but faint persuasions about these matters; few or none having clear notions, or steady opinions about any such things; whence their practice, in correspondence to their rules, must needs have been very loose, or very lame; so that well might our Apostle say of them, *They became vain in their reasonings, διαλογισμοῖς, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves wise, they became fools; and even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.*

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Eph. vi.
12; ii. 2.
John xii.
31; xiv. 30;
xvi. 11.
2 Cor. iv. 4.
2 Tim. ii.
16.
Col. i. 13;
ii. 15.
Acts xxvi.
18.

Rom. i. 21,
28.

As for the other part, or little parcel of men, the condition of that was also very low: if the rest

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Col. ii. 17.
Heb. viii.
5; x. 1.

Rom. viii.

Gal. iii. 21;
Heb. vii.
18, 19.

of the world did lie in dark night, they did live but in a dusky twilight; their Religion was much wrapt up in shadow and mystery; they had but dilute ideas of God's nature, and scant discoveries of his will; their law or rule of practice in divers respects was defective and infirm; they were locked under the discipline of childish rudiments, suiting their raw capacities, and under the bondage of slavish yokes, befitting their stubborn dispositions; which defailances in notion their practice commonly did outstrip; being fond, corrupt, hypocritical, void of interior, substantial, and genuine righteousness; as the old Prophets did often complain, and as our Lord, with his Apostles, did urge.

Gal. iii. 22.
Rom. xi.
32;
iii. 9, 19.

Such was the state of the world in its parts; and jointly of the whole it may be said, that it was shut up under sin and guilt, under darkness and weakness, under death and corruption, under sorrow and woe: that no full declaration of God's pleasure, no clear overture of mercy, no express grant of spiritual aid, no certain redemption from the filth or the force of sin, from the stroke of death, from due punishment hereafter; no encouragements suitable to high devotion, or strict virtue, were anywise in a solemn way exhibited or dispensed before our Lord's appearance: so that well might all men be then represented as Cimmerians, sitting in darkness, in the region and shadow of death; well may we suppose all ages foregoing to have teemed with hope and desire of this happy day; or that, as St Paul saith, *The whole creation* (that is, all mankind) *groaneth together, and travaileth together until now*; as labouring with pangs of implicit desire, or under a painful sense of need-

Isai. ix. 1.
Matt. iv.
16.

Rom. viii.
22.

ing a Saviour; well might Isaiah thus proclaim SERM. LXI.
his coming; *Arise, shine; for thy light is come,* Isai. lx. 1, 2, 3.
and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For,
behold, darkness shall cover the land, and gross
darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon
thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And
the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the
brightness of thy rising: for, now, The Lord hath Ps. xcvi. 2, 3.
made known his salvation; his righteousness hath
he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen. The Isai. lii. 10.
Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of
all the nations; and all the ends of the earth do see
the salvation of our God.

Now *We are all children of the light, and of the* 1 Thess. v. 5.
day; All do know God from the least to the greatest; 2 Cor. iii. 18; iv. 6.
the rarest, the deepest notions are grown common Heb. viii. 11.
and obvious; every child is instructed in the highest Jer. xxxi. 34.
truths, every peasant is become a great philosopher,
(beyond Aristotle, or Plato, or Epictetus,) skilful
of the best knowledge, able to direct his life in the
best way, capable of obtaining the best good.

Now the Spirit of God (the Spirit of direction, Acts ii. 17.
of succour, of comfort spiritual) is poured upon all Joel ii. 28.
flesh. *Now the grace of God, that bringeth salva-* Tit. ii. 11.
tion, hath appeared to all men; fully instructing Luke xxiv. 47.
them in their duty, and strongly enabling them to
perform it, freely offering them mercy, mightily
encouraging them with hopes of most blessed re-
wards.

Now Jew and Gentile are reunited and com- Eph. iii. 6;
pacted in one body; walking in the same light, ii. 15.
and under obligation to the same laws; sharing in
a common redemption and inheritance; being in-
separably linked together with the bands of faith,

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2 Cor. v.
17.
Heb. ix.
10.

of charity, of spiritual fraternity; thus *Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new*, in virtue and consequence of our Lord's appearance: in contemplation of which so great, so general, so happy a change, how can we forbear to rejoice?

But further, that we may yet more nearly touch the point,

1 John iv.
9.
John iii.
16, 17.
Eph. ii. 4.
Luke i. 78.

3 Let us consider, that the nativity of our Lord is a grand instance, a pregnant evidence, a rich earnest of Almighty God's very great affection and benignity toward mankind: for, *In this*, saith St John, *the love of God was manifested, that God sent his only begotten Son into the world*: and, *Through the tender mercies of our God*, sang old Zechariah, *the dayspring from on high did visit us*: this indeed is the peculiar experiment, wherein that most divine attribute did shew and signalize itself. The power of God doth brightly shine in the creation, the wisdom of God may clearly be discerned in the government of things: but the incarnation of God is that work, is that dispensation of grace, wherein the divine goodness doth most conspicuously display itself¹. How, indeed, possibly could God have demonstrated a greater excess of kindness toward

¹ Apparuerat ante potentia in rerum creatione, apparebat sapientia in earum gubernatione; sed benignitas misericordiae nunc maxime apparuit in humanitate.—Bern. in Nativ. Dom. Serm. i. [Opp. Tom. i. col. 1744 c.]

Semper quidem diversis modis multisque mensuris humano generi bonitas divina consuluit, et plurima providentiae suae munera omnibus retro seculis clementer impertiit; sed in novissimis temporibus omnem abundantiam solitae benignitatis excessit, quando in Christo, ipsa ad peccatores misericordia, ipsa ad errantes veritas, ipsa ad mortuos vita descendit, &c.—P. Leo M. de Nat. Serm. iv. [Opp. Tom. i. col. 78.]

us, than by thus, for our sake and good, sending his dearest Son out of his bosom into this sordid and servile state, subjecting him to all the infirmities of our frail nature, exposing him to the worst inconveniences of our low condition? What expressions can signify, what comparisons can set out the stupendous vastness of this kindness? If we should imagine, that a great prince should put his only son (a son most lovely, and worthily most beloved) into rags, should dismiss him from his court, should yield him up into the hardest slavery, merely to the intent that he thereby might redeem from captivity the meanest and basest of his subjects, how faint the resemblance would be of that immense goodness, of that incomparable mercy, which in this instance the King of all the world hath declared toward us his poor vassals, his indeed unworthy rebels!

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Ps. xxxvi.
6; cviii. 4.

And what greater reason of joy can there be, than such an assurance of his love, on whose love all our good dependeth, in whose love all our felicity consisteth? What can be more delightful than to view the face of our Almighty Lord so graciously smiling upon us?

Should we not be extremely glad, should we not be proud, if our earthly prince by any signal mark would express himself kindly affected to us? How much more should we resent such a testimony of God's favour! how worthily may our souls be transported with a sense of such affection!

4 We may consider our Lord's nativity, as not only expressing simple good-will, but implying a perfect reconciliation, a firm peace, a steady friendship established between God and us; or that it

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Rom. iii.
23; ix. 23.
Gal. iii. 22.
Eccles. vii.
20.

Eph. ii. 15,
16.
Rom. viii.
3.
2 Cor. v.
19.

did not only proceed from love, but did also produce love to us. We did stand at a great distance, in estrangement, yea in enmity toward God; our first parents had by presumptuous disobedience revolted from him; and we, insisting on the footsteps of their apostasy, continued in defiance of him; *All men had sinned, and fallen short of the glory of God—There was not a righteous man upon earth, that did good, and sinned not*: whence unavoidably the wrath of the most holy God was incensed, the justice of the most righteous Lord was engaged against us; thence did issue a sad doom, thence a just sentence of capital punishment was denounced on us; no pretence of favour, no overture of peace, no hope of redress did then appear; we nowise being able to expunge our guilt, to repair our offences, to recover out of that corruption in mind and will, which did seal us up to ruin, indisposing us either to find or to entertain mercy^m: but our Lord's coming did appease that anger, did mollify that justice, did suspend that condemnation, did close the breach, and slay the enmity; *God, as the Apostle speaketh, sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin did condemn sin in the fleshⁿ*:

^m Ἀδύνατον γέγονε τῇ φύσει, λογικῇ οὔσῃ καὶ ἐκουσίως ἀμαρτησάσῃ, καὶ ὑπὸ καταδίκην θανάτου γινομένη, ἑαυτὴν ἀνακαλέσασθαι εἰς ἐλευθερίαν.—Athan. [con. Apoll. Lib. II. Opp. Tom. I. p. 944 E.]

Ἀδύνατον γὰρ ἐτέρως τὸ καθαρὸν καὶ ἀναμάρτητον ἐπ' ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως παραδεχθῆναι, εἰ μὴ Θεὸς ἐν σαρκὶ πιστεύοιτο εἶναι, ὁ τὴν ἀναμάρτητον δικαιοσύνην εἰς κόσμον εἰσαγαγών, &c.—Ep. de Incarn. Verbi. [Opp. Tom. II. p. 34 B.]

ⁿ Τὸ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ σύμπτωμα εἰς ἀσύγκριτον ἀνάστημα Χριστοῦ ἀνεστήσατο, ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἀμαρτίας ὀφθεῖς, καὶ κατακρίνας τὴν ἀμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί.—[con. Apoll. Lib. I. Opp. Tom. I. p. 927 C.]

Εἰ δὲ μὴ ἐν τῇ ἀμαρτησάσῃ φύσει ἡ ἀναμαρτησία ᾤφθη, πῶς κατεκρίθη ἡ ἀμαρτία ἐν τῇ σαρκί;—[con. Apoll. Lib. II. p. 945 A.]

for how can God now avert his face from us, whom his only dear Son hath vouchsafed to make and own for his brethren? How can he look with an eye of displeasure on that nature, where- with that Son of his love standeth clothed before him? How can he abide offended with our race, in which pure innocence and perfect obedience are found, he now appearing with us, and for us, in whom not the strictest justice nor the shrewdest malice can descry any fault or blemish^o; *In whom therefore God is thoroughly well pleased?* Since we have *Emmanuel, God with us—God manifested in our flesh—The Lord our righteousness*, partaker of our infirmity, intercessor and advocate for his own flesh and blood, ready to do and suffer whatever God pleaseth to require on our behalf, how can God be against us? Shall God and man persist at distance or disaffection, who are so closely related, who are, indeed, so intimately united in one person? Shall heaven and earth retain enmity, which have so kindly embraced and kissed each other; since *Truth hath sprouted from the earth, and righteousness hath looked down from heaven?* Shall the war go on, when the great Mediator and Umpire of peace is come; *Preaching peace to them that are afar off, and to them that are near?* Can death any longer reign over us, or our disgrace and misery continue, now that *the Prince of life, the Lord of glory, the Captain of salvation* doth appear for our relief?

Now then what can be more worthy of joy, than such a blessed turn of affairs? How can we

^o Ἐν ἐμοὶ οὐκ ἔχει οὐδέν.—John xiv. 30.

Οὐχ εὐρίσκω ἐν αὐτῷ αἰτίαν.—John xix. 6.

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1 Pet. i. 19.
Heb. vii.
26.

Matt. iii.

17;
i. 23.

1 Tim. iii.
16.

Jer. xxiii.
6;

xxxiii. 16.

Psal.
lxxxv. 11.

Isai. ix. 6.
Acts x. 36.
Eph. ii. 17.

1 Cor. ii. 8.

Heb. ii. 10.

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otherwise than with exceeding gladness solemnize such a peace? a peace accorded with him, who in forces so infinitely doth overmatch us; who at his pleasure can utterly quell us; who with the greatest ease, with less than a word of his mouth, can dash us to nothing, or hurl us down into an abyss of remediless woe: how can we avoid being extremely satisfied at the recovery of his favour and friendship, which alone can be the foundation of our safety and welfare, which is the sole fountain of all good, of all comfort, of all felicity?

Eph. iii.
10, 19.

5 Our Lord's nativity doth infer a great honour, and a high preferment to us: nowise, indeed, could mankind be so dignified, or our nature so advanced as hereby: no wisdom can devise a way beyond this, whereby God should honour his most special favourites, or promote them to a nearness unto himself. For hence we become allied to God in a most strait affinity, his eternal Son being made our brother^p: hence as touching the blood-royal of heaven we do in dignity o'ertop all the creation; so that what the Psalmist uttered concerning man is verified in the most comprehensive

Psal. viii.
5, 6.
Heb. ii. 7,
8.

sense; *Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour, and hast set him over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet*: for now the Son of man, being also the Son of God, is *The head of all principality and power, is The Lord of all things, is the sovereign prince of all the world, is placed Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this*

Col. ii. 10.
Eph. ii. 22.
Acts x. 36.
Eph. i. 21.
Phil. ii. 9.
1 Pet. iii.
22.

^p Ἡνωμένος Πατρὶ κατὰ πνεῦμα, ἡμῖν δὲ κατὰ σάρκα.—Athan. [de Incarn. Opp. Tom. i. p. 888 c.]

world, but also in that which is to come. This is a SERM. LXI.
 peculiar honour, to which the highest angels cannot pretend; for, *He took not the nature of angels*, Heb. ii. 16;
but he took the seed of Abraham; whence those noble creatures are become in a manner inferior to poor us; and, according to just obligation, willingly do adore our nature; for, *When God brought his* i. 6.
firstbegotten Son into the world he said, Let all the angels of God worship him. Is not, indeed, our flesh become adorable, as the true Shechinah, as the everlasting palace of the supreme Majesty^a,
Wherein the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily; Col. ii. 9.
 as the most holy shrine of the Divinity; as the orb of inaccessible light; as more than all this, if more could be expressed, or if we could expound that text, *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt* John i. 14;
in us? May not our soul worthily claim highest iii. 34.
 respect, all whose faculties (being endued with unmeasurable participations of the Holy Spirit) have been tuned to a perfect harmony with the all-wise understanding and the most pure will of God? yea, which hath been admitted into the nearest consortship, into the strictest union with the eternal Word; hath become an ingredient of him, who is *The wisdom and the power of God?* It was a i Cor. i. 24.
 great dignity that man should be made according to the image of God; but it is a more sublime glory, that God should be made after the image of man^r,

^a Ἡ σὰρξ αὐτοῦ σὺν αὐτῷ ἐθεολογήθη.—Id. [Ibid. p. 873 A.]

Totum corpus implet tota divinitas.—P. Leo. i. de Nat. Serm. x. [Opp. Tom. i. col. 108.]

^r Qui cum origini humanæ multum dederit, quod nos ad imaginem suam fecit, reparationi nostræ longe amplius tribuit, cum servili formæ ipse se Dominus coaptavit.—De Nat. Serm. iv. [Opp. Tom. i. col. 79.]

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Being made like to us in all things, κατὰ πάντα ὁμοιωθεὶς, bating only sin, which is no part of us, but an unnatural excrescence, or a deflection from our nature: how could we be so raised up to God, as by his thus stooping down to us? What can be imagined more honourable to us, than that God should deem us worthy of such condescension^s? This, this indeed is our exaltation, that God for us should express not only so vast charity, but so prodigious humility.

And is it not good matter of joy to be thus highly graced? When are men better pleased than when they are preferred; than especially, when from the meanest state, from the dunghill, or from the dust, they are raised to be set among princes, and made to inherit the throne of glory? Wherefore this being our case, that we sons of earth, children of corruption, and brethren of worms, (in Job's style;) we exiles of paradise, we heirs of death and misery; we, that by our nature are the lowest of all intelligent creatures, that by our merits were debased beneath the beasts that perish, that we are assumed to such relations, that we are ennobled to such a pitch^t, that our nature hath mounted so high above all creatures, with what enlargement of heart should we entertain a dispensation so wonderful! how welcome should that day be which doth introduce it!

Psal. cxiii.
7, 8.
I Sam. ii. 8.

Job xvii.
14.

Psal. xlix.
12.

^s Exultent ergo justi in Domino, et in laudem Dei corda credentium, et mirabilia ejus confiteantur filii hominum: quoniam in hoc præcipue Dei opere humilitas nostra cognoscit, quanti eam suus conditor æstimarit.—Id. Ibid.

^t Hic infirmitatis nostræ suscipiens conditionem, propter quos ad inferna descendit, eosdem in cœlestibus collocavit.—De Nat. Serm. v. [col. 86.]

6 Finally, if we survey all principal causes of joy and special exultation, we shall find them all concurring in this event. SERM.
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Is a messenger of good news embraced with joy? Behold the great Evangelist is come, with his mouth full of news, most admirable, most acceptable: he, who doth acquaint us, that God is well pleased, that man is restored, that the adversary is cast down, that paradise is set open, and immortality retrieved; that truth and righteousness, peace and joy, salvation and happiness are descended, and come to dwell on earth; he of whom the prophet told, *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth*; he who doth himself thus declare the drift and purport of his message; *The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord; to comfort all that mourn.*

Is the birth of a prince by honest subjects to be commemorated with joyous festivity? Behold a Prince born to all the world! a Prince undertaking to rule mankind with sweetest clemency and exact justice; a Prince bringing with him all peace and prosperity; *In whose days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely*: who shall protect us in assured rest and safety; shall secure us from all danger and mischief; shall achieve most gallant and glorious exploits in our behalf;

Rev. xii.

10.

John xiv.

30.

Luke x.

18.

Isai. lii. 7.

Nah. i. 15.

Rom. x. 15.

Isai. lxi. 1,

2.

Luke iv.

18, 19.

Isai. xi. 2.

Psal. xlv.

& lxxii.

Jer. xxiii.

6.

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shall vanquish all the enemies of our welfare ;
shall rescue us from the worst slaveries and mis-
chiefs ; shall settle us in a most free and happy
state : *He who bringeth salvation from our ene-
mies, and from the hands of all that hate us ;
that, being delivered from the hands of our ene-
mies, we might serve him without fear, in holi-
ness and righteousness before him, all the days of
our life.* Now therefore it is seasonable to cry
out, *Allelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reign-
eth ; let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour
to him.*

Isai. ix. 3. May victory worthily beget exultation ? See
Rev. vi. 2. the invincible Warrior doth issue forth into the
field, conquering and to conquer : he that shall
baffle and rifle the strong one, our formidable ad-
versary ; that shall rout all the forces of hell, and
triumph over the powers of darkness ; that utterly
shall defeat sin, and slay death itself ; that shall
subdue the world, and lay all things prostrate at
his feet ; behold the Captain of our salvation,
arrayed with glorious humility, and armed with
a mighty patience ; see, the great blow is struck,
which the infernal powers do stagger ; the Devil's
pride and envy are abased, all the enemies are
amazed, are daunted, are confounded at his pre-
sence ; they cannot stand, they break, they scatter,
they flee before him.

Eph. ii. 17. Is a proclamation of peace, after rueful wars, to
be solemnized with alacrity ? Behold then ever-
lasting peace between heaven and earth, a general
peace among men, a sound peace between each
good man and himself are settled and published ;
the illustrious herald, the noble hostage of them is

arrived; *The Prince of peace* himself doth bring all peace unto us. SERM.
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Is satisfaction of desire and hope very pleasant? Behold the *Desire of all nations, the expectation of Israel*, he for whom the whole creation groaned, is come. Isai. lvii. 2.
Acts x. 36.
Isai. ix. 6.
Hag. ii. 7.

Is recovery of liberty delectable to poor slaves and captives? Behold the Redeemer is come out of Sion; the precious ransom, sufficient to purchase the freedom of many worlds, is laid down; unblemished innocence, purity, and perfection appearing in human nature, have procured a releasement for us; have unlocked the prison of sin detaining us, have knocked off the shackles of guilt sorely pinching and galling our consciences; have wrested us from the hands of those proud masters, who claimed a right, who exercised a most tyrannous power over us^u; he is come, that proclaimeth liberty to the captives, and opening of the prison to them that are bound; the time is come, of which the Prophet foretold, *The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.* Isai. lix. 20.
Rom. xi. 26.
Gal. iii. 22.
Isai. lxi. 1.
Luke iv. 18.
Isai. xxxv. 10.

Is an overture of health acceptable to sick and languishing persons? Behold the great Physician, endued with admirable skill, and furnished with infallible remedies, is come, to cure us of our maladies, and ease us of our pains; to bind up our wounds, and to pour in balm (the most sovereign Luke x. 33.
Matt. ix. 12.
1 Pet. ii. 24.

^u Nam superbia hostis antiqui non immerito sibi in omnes homines jus tyrannicum vindicabat, nec indebito dominatu premebat, quos a mandato Dei spontaneos in obsequium suæ voluntatis illexerat.—Id. de Nat. Serm. ii. [Opp. Tom. i. col. 70.]

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Isai. lxi. 1.
Luke iv.
18.

Isai. liii. 4.
Matt. viii.
17.

Isai. xxxv.
4, 5, 6.

Matt. xi. 5.
Luke v. 17.

John xii.
40.

Acts x. 38.
Luke x. 34.

Ezek.
xxxvi. 26.
Eph. ii. 10.

balm of his own blood) into them; to free us, not only from all mortiferous diseases, but from mortality itself: he, who was sent to bind up and heal the brokenhearted; he, who *Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses*; he, of whom the Prophet (in relation to corporal, and much more to spiritual infirmities) did foretell; *God will come and save you; then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing*; he, whose art no disease can resist, who is able to cure our most desperate, our most inveterate distempers; to heal the corruption and impotency of our nature, to void the ignorances and errors of our understanding, to correct the stupidity of our hearts, the perverseness of our wills, the disorder of our affections, to mitigate our anguish of conscience, and cleanse our sores of guilt; by various efficacious medicines, by the wholesome instructions of his doctrine, by the powerful inspirations of his grace, by the refreshing comforts of his Spirit, by the salutary virtue of his merits and sufferings.

Is mirth seasonable on the day of marriage? Behold the greatest wedding that ever was is this day solemnized; heaven and earth are contracted; divinity is espoused to humanity; a sacred, an indissoluble knot is tied between God and man; *The Bridegroom is come forth out of his chamber, (Verbum Dei de utero virginali,)* clad in his nuptial garment of flesh, and ready to wed the church, his beloved spouse^x; *Let us therefore be glad and*

^x In Natali enim Domini, Fratres dilectissimi, quasi in nuptiis spiritualibus, sponsæ suæ Ecclesiæ Christus adjunctus est.—Tunc

rejoice; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. SERM.
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Is the access of a good friend to be received with cheerful gratulation? Behold the dearest and best Friend of all mankind (most able, most willing, most ready to perform all good offices, to impart wholesome advice, needful aid, sweet converse, and seasonable consolation) is arrived to visit us, to sojourn with us, to dwell in us for ever.

Is opportune relief grateful to persons in a forlorn condition, pinched with extreme want, or plunged in any hard distress? Behold a merciful, a bountiful, a mighty Saviour and succourer, undertaking to comfort all that mourn, inviting all such to receive from him a plentiful supply for their needs, a comfortable ease in their pressures, a happy riddance from their calamities; *Who crieth aloud, (ἐκραγε,) If any one thirsteth, let him come to me and drink: Come to me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* Isai. lxi. 2.
John vii.
37.
Isai. lv. 1;
xliv. 3.
Matt. xi.
28.

Is the sun-rising comfortable, after a tedious, darksome, and cold night? See, *The Sun of righteousness is risen with healing in his wings, dispensing all about his pleasant rays and kindly influences: The dayspring from on high hath visited us; diffusing an universal light upon the souls of men, whereby the night of ignorance is dispelled, the spectres of error are vanished, the mists of* Mal. iv. 2.
Luke i. 78.

processit sponsus de thalamo suo, hoc est, Verbum Dei de utero virginali.—Aug. de temp. Serm. II. [Opp. Tom. v. (App.) Serm. cxvi. 211 D.]

Ἡ παστὰς, ἐν ᾗ ὁ λόγος ἐνυμφεύσατο τὴν σάρκα.—Procl. Episc. Cyz. [Hom. in Conc. Eph. apud Bin. Tom. II. p. 1 C.]

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Isai. lx. 1.
John viii.
12; ix. 5;
i. 9.
Luke iii. 6;
i. 79.

doubt are scattered; whereby we clearly and assuredly discern all truths of importance to us, and worthy of our knowledge; concerning the nature and attributes, the works and providence, the will and pleasure of God; concerning ourselves, our nature and original, our duty and interest, our future state, and final doom: *Our light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon us; The light of the world, the true light, enlightening every man, by whose lustre all flesh may see the salvation of God, and which guideth our feet in the way of peace, doth visibly shine forth upon us.*

Rev. xxii.
16;

Never, indeed, did heaven with so fair and serene a countenance smile upon earth, as then it did, when this *Bright and morning star*, ἀστὴρ λαμπρὸς καὶ ὀρθρινὸς did spring up above our horizon, bringing this goodly day; and with it shedding life and cheer among us.

xx. 14.

From this auspicious day did commence the revocation of that fatal curse, by which we were expelled from paradise, adjudged to death, and committed to hell; from thence we became reinstated in a condition of hope, and in a fair capacity of happiness; from thence is to be dated a return of joy into this region of disconsolateness. In this nativity mankind was born, or did revive from manifold deaths; from a legal, a moral, a natural, an eternal death; from lying dead in irreparable guilt, and under an insuperable power of sin; from having our bodies irrecoverably dissolved by corruption, and our souls immersed into that second more ghastly death of perpetual incurable anguish.

It is in effect therefore the birthday of the

world^y; the beginning of a new, better, eternal life to men, (offered to all, and effectually bestowed on those who will embrace it,) which we now do celebrate. All reason therefore we have to rejoice most heartily and most abundantly: as the goods thence accruing to us are in multitude innumerable, in quality inestimable, in duration immense; so in some correspondence should our joy be very intense, very effuse, very stable; the contemplation of them should infuse somewhat of that unspeakable joy, whereof St Peter speaketh; we should be filled, according to St Paul's expression, with all joy and peace in believing them; we should hold fast, as the Apostle to the Hebrews adviseth, the confidence and rejoicing of hope, grounded on them, firm to the end.

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1 Pet. i. 8.

Rom. xv.

Phil. i. 25.

Heb. iii. 6.

Rom. xii.

12.

Having so many, so great causes of joy, are we not very stupid, are we not strangely cross and perverse, if we neglect so pleasant a duty?

To conclude: Of all the days that rise upon us, this undoubtedly is the queen, crowned by God's own hand with sovereign blessings; God hath avowed it to be the day of his peculiar making, and therefore of our special rejoicing; for thus of old the inspired Psalmist did teach and exhort us to keep Christmas: *This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad therein.*

Ps. cxviii.

24.

Matt. xxi.

9. 42.

1 Pet. ii. 7.

Acts iv. 11.

^y It is the birthday of the Church. *Generatio enim Christi origo est populi Christiani; et natalis capitis natalis est corporis.*—P. Leo. 1. de Nat. Serm. vi. [Opp. Tom. i. col. 88.]

Sicut cum Christo in passione crucifixi, in resurrectione resuscitati, in ascensione ad dextram Patris collocati, ita cum ipso sumus in hac nativitate congeniti.—Id. Ibid.

SERMON LXII.

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST FORETOLD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

ACTS III. 18.

But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his Prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

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MANY good arguments there are, different in kind, which conspire to persuade the truth of our religion; such as are the intrinsic reasonableness, excellency, and perfection of its doctrine; the miraculous works performed in attestation thereto; the special favour of Providence declared in the support and propagation thereof: but upon no other ground do the Scriptures so much build its truth, and our obligation to embrace it, as upon the exact correspondence and conformity thereof to all the ancient Scriptures, which did foreshew or foretell its revelation and introduction into the world; to those especially which described the personal characters, circumstances, and performances of our Lord: to this our Lord, in his discourses and disputes with incredulous people, referred them; *Search the Scriptures*, said he, *because in them ye expect to have eternal life; (that is, to find the true way of saving truth leading thereto;) and those are they which testify of me:* by this he

John v. 39.

instructed and convinced his disciples; *Beginning from Moses and from all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself: and, These* (said he to them presently before his departure) *are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me: this the Apostles, in all their preaching, (whereby they taught, proved, and persuaded the Christian doctrine,) did chiefly insist upon; Moses, saith St Peter, truly said unto the fathers, yea, and all the Prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days; and, To him, saith he again, give all the Prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. And of St Paul it is said, that He mightily convinced the Jews—shewing by the Scriptures, that Jesus was the Christ; and—he expounded, and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the Law of Moses, and out of the Prophets: thus the chief Apostles and founders of our Religion in their public discourses; and in their Epistles they observe the same method; as particularly asserting Christian doctrines and duties by the testimonies of prophetical Scriptures, so generally affirming our Religion to be chiefly grounded on them; Of which salvation* (saith St Peter, concerning the salvation exhibited by the Gospel) *the Prophets did inquire, and search diligently, who prophesied of the grace to come unto you; and (in regard to the conviction of others) he seems to prefer the*

SERM.
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Luke xxiv.
27; xxii.
37; i. 70;
xxiv. 44.

Acts iii.
22, 24;

x. 43;
xiii. 27;
xv. 15;
xxiv. 14.
John i. 45.
Acts xviii.
28;
xxviii. 23.

i Pet. i. 10.

SERM. LXII. attestation of this kind before the special revelation immediately made to the Apostles; for having
 2 Pet. i. 19. spoken of it, he subjoins, *Καὶ ἔχομεν βεβαιότερον τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον, We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye do take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.* And St Paul saith, that *The mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, was then made manifest, and by the prophetical Scriptures, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations, to the obedience of faith;* and, *The holy writings,* he telleth Timothy, *were able to make him wise to the salvation which is by the faith of Jesus Christ;* that is, they were able to shew and persuade to him the truth of Christianity, which promiseth salvation to all that heartily embrace it and observe its laws.

Rom. xvi. 25, 26; i. 2.
 2 Tim. iii. 15.

Such a stress was laid upon this probation by the founders of our Religion; and no wonder; for that it is not only extremely forcible in itself, but hath some particular uses, and some peculiar advantages beyond others. The foreknowledge of future contingent events, (such as were many of those concerning our Saviour, depending upon the freest acts of human will,) as it is for the manner of attaining it most incomprehensible to us, so it is most proper to God, and by all men so acknowledged; future contingencies being secrets which no man, no angel, no creature can dive into, they being not discernible in their causes, which are indeterminate; nor in themselves, who are finite. The prediction therefore of such events could not

otherwise than proceed from his pleasure; neither could he yield it in way of favour and approbation to that which was not perfectly true and good: this way therefore doth absolutely confirm the truth and goodness of Christian doctrine; it withal manifests the great worth and weight thereof, as implying the particular regard and care God had of it, designing it so anciently, laying trains of Providence toward it, and preparing such evidences for the confirmation thereof; it together into the bargain maintaineth the truth of the Jewish dispensation, the sincerity of the ancient Patriarchs and Prophets, and the vigilant care the divine goodness hath always had over the state of Religion, and toward the welfare of mankind; never leaving it destitute of some immediate revelations from himself. It had a peculiar aptitude to convert the Jews, who were possessed with a full persuasion concerning the veracity and sanctity of their ancient Prophets; and could not therefore doubt concerning the truth of that, which appeared conformable to that, which they had foretold should be declared and dispensed for their benefit. This probation also hath this advantage, that it, singly taken, doth suffice to convince; whereas others can hardly do it, otherwise than in conjunction with one another, and especially with its aid: for the goodness of the doctrine may be contested in some points; and however good it seem, it may be imputed to human invention: strange effects may be deemed producible by other causes beside divine power; and they may be suffered to be done for other ends than for confirmation of truth; they are also commonly transient, and thence most liable

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to doubt. Providence also is in many cases so mysterious and unsearchable, that the incredulous will never allow any inferences to be drawn from it: but the plain correspondence of events to the standing records of ancient prophecies (obvious and conspicuous to every one that will consult and compare them) concerning a person to be sent by God, who should have such circumstances, and be so qualified, who should in God's name preach such doctrines and perform such works, is a proof, which alone may assure any man, that such a person doth come from God, and is, in what he declareth or doeth, approved by him: no counterfeiting can here find place; no evasion can be devised from the force of this proof.

This way therefore of discourse our Lord and his Apostles (whose business it was by the most proper and effectual methods to subdue the reasons of men to the obedience of faith and entertainment of Christian truth) did especially use; as generally in respect to all things concerning our Lord, so particularly in regard to his passion; declaring it to happen punctually according to what had been foreseen by God, and thence foreshewed by his

Prophets, rightly understood; *He took the twelve, saith St Luke of our Lord, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the Prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished: for he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on; and they shall scourge him, and put him to death. And again, after his resurrection, he thus reproves his disciples; O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that*

xxiv. 25,
26, 46;

the Prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? SERM.
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They did not then (partly being blinded with prejudice, partly not having used due industry, and perhaps not excelling in natural capacity; however, not yet being sufficiently enlightened by divine grace) apprehend, or discern, that, according to the prophetical instructions, our Lord was so to suffer; but afterward, when *He had opened* Luke xxiv.
45. *their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures*, they did see, and specially urge this point: then St Peter declared, that *The Spirit of* 1 Pet. i. 11. *Christ, which was in the Prophets, did testify beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*; then it was their manner to reason (as is said of St Paul) out of the Scriptures, *Opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered* Acts xvii.
2, 3; xxvi.
22, 23. *: Saying none other things than those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come, that Christ should suffer*; *Delivering first of all, that* 1 Cor. xv.
3. *Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures*: this is that which in my text St Peter doth insist upon, affirming about the passion of Christ, that it not only had been predicted by one, or more, but foreshewed by an universal consent of all the Prophets; to illustrate and confirm which assertion of his, is the scope of our present discourse: to perform which, after having briefly touched the state of the matter in hand, we shall apply ourselves.

That the Messiah was to come in an humble and homely manner; (without appearance of worldly splendour or grandeur;) that he was to converse among men in a state of external poverty and

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meanness; that he was to cause offences, and find opposition in his proceedings; that he was to be repulsed and rejected, to be hated and scorned, to be disgracefully and harshly treated, to be grievously persecuted and afflicted; yea, that at last he was to be prosecuted, condemned, and executed as a malefactor, is a truth indeed, which the Jews (although they firmly believed and earnestly expected the coming of a Messias) did not, and indeed were hardly capable to entertain. It was a point repugnant to the whole frame of their conceits; yea, inconsistent with the nature and drift of their Religion, as they did understand it; for their Religion in its surface (deeper than which their gross fancy could not penetrate) did represent earthly wealth, dignity, and prosperity, as things most highly valuable; did propound them as very proper, if not as the sole rewards of piety and obedience; did imply consequently the possession of them to be certain arguments of the Divine good-will and regard: they could not therefore but esteem poverty, affliction, and disgrace, as curses from heaven, and plain indications of God's disfavour toward those on whom they fell: they particularly are said to have conceited, that to be rich was a needful qualification for a prophet; (no less needful, than to be of a good complexion, of a good capacity, of a good conversation and life:) *Spiritus Dei non requiescit super pauperem*, *The Spirit of God doth not rest upon a poor man*; (that is, no special communications of grace, or of wisdom and goodness, are by God ever afforded to persons of a low and afflicted condition;) being a maxim which they had framed, and which currently passed among

them: that he therefore, who was designed to be so notable a prophet; who was to have the honour of being so special an instrument of promoting God's service and glory; who therefore should be so highly favoured by God, that he should appear despicable, and undergo great afflictions, was a notion that could not but seem very absurd; that could not otherwise than be very abominable to them. They had further (in congruity to these prejudices, abetted by that extreme self-love and self-flattery, which were peculiar to that nation) raised in themselves a strong opinion, that the Messiah was to come in a great visible state and power; to achieve deeds of mighty prowess and renown; to bring the nations of the world into subjection under him; and so to reign among them in huge majesty and prosperity. When Jesus therefore (however otherwise answerable in his circumstances, qualifications, and performances, to the prophetic characters of the Messiah) did first appear such as he did, with some pretences, or intimations rather, that he was the Messiah, their stomach presently rose at it; they were exceedingly scandalized at him; they deemed him not only a madman, (one possessed or distracted) and an impostor, but a blasphemer; for no less than blasphemy they took it to be for so mean and pitiful a wretch (as to their eyes he seemed) to assume unto himself so high a dignity, and so near a relation unto God, as being the Messiah did import. We even see the disciples themselves of our Lord so deeply imbued with this national prejudice, that, even after they had avowed him for the Christ, they could scarce with patience hear him

SERM.
LXII.Matt. xvi.
20.xiii. 57;
xxvi. 65.

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foretelling what grievous things should befall him: St Peter himself, upon that occasion, even just after he seriously had confessed him to be the Christ, *Did*, as it is expressed, *take him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord*: yea, presently after that our Lord most plainly had described his sufferings to them, they could not forbear dreaming of a kingdom, and of being grandees therein: yea, further, even after our Lord's passion and resurrection, this fancy still possessed them; for even then they demanded of him, whether he would at that time restore the kingdom unto Israel; meaning such an external visible kingdom.

Matt. xvi.
22;

xx. 21, 25.

Acts i. 6.

I Cor. i.

23.

Acts xiii.

27; iii. 17.

John xv.

21.

I Cor. ii. 8.

telleth us, was the main scandal, which obstructed their embracing the Gospel. As it was their ignorance or error in this point, which disposed them to persecute our Lord; (*Nisi enim ignoratus, nihil scilicet pati posset*, as Tertullian saith^a; *If they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory*, saith St Paul;) so it was that which maintained their obstinate hatred of his name and

^a Adv. Marc. iii. 6. [Opp. p. 399 D.]

memory; although graced with so illustrious testimonies of divine power and providence.

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We cannot therefore here, as in other particulars concerning our Lord, allege the general consent of God's people in expounding the Prophets according to our sense, this being one of those points, in respect to which the Prophets themselves did foresee and foretell their perverse stupidity and incredulity^b; that they should look, and not see; hear, and not understand; yielding herein special occasion to that complaint, *Who hath believed our report?* Yet, notwithstanding their affected and culpable blindness, there is no particular concerning the Messiah in the ancient Scriptures, either more frequently in way of mystical insinuation and adumbration glanced at, or more clearly in direct and plain language expressed; or which also by reasonable deduction thence may be more strongly inferred than this.

Isai. vi. 9.
Matt. xiii.
13.
Ezek. xii. 2.
Acts
xxviii. 26.
Isai. liii. 1.

I say, first, it is frequently glanced at by mystical insinuations; for explaining the intent of which assertion, we shall premise somewhat, which may serve to declare the pertinency of many citations produced out of the ancient Scripture in the New Testament; the which, together with others connected with them, or bearing just analogy to them, we also, being assured of their design by the authority of our Lord and his Apostles, may safely presume after them to apply to the same purposes.

We may then consider, that the all-wise God, (*Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, and to whom all things are present,*) having before eternal times, as St Paul speaketh,

Eph. i. 11.
2 Tim. i. 9.
Tit. i. 2.
1 Cor. ii. 7.

^b Vid. Tertull. ibid.

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Eph. i. 3;
iii. 9.

Rom. xvi.

25.

Col. i. 26.

determined in due time to send the Messias, for accomplishing the greatest design that ever was to be managed in this world, (that which should bring the highest glory to himself, and procure the richest benefits to the principal of his creatures here,) did by his incomprehensible providence so order things, that all the special dispensations preceding it should have a fit tendency and an advantageous reference thereto; so that, when it came upon the stage, it might appear that the main of the plot consisted therein; and that whatever was acted before had principally a respect thereto. As therefore from the beginning of things God did in a gradual method make real preparations towards it, by several steps imparting discoveries of his mind about it, or in order thereto, (somewhat to Adam himself, more to Abraham and the Patriarchs, somewhat further to Moses, much more yet to divers of the Prophets among his chosen people, who not only foretold largely concerning it, but delivered divers kinds of instruction conformable to it, and conducive to the promoting and entertainment thereof,) so he did also take especial care by many apposite representations, (*νοητὰ θεωρήματα*, *intelligible spectacles*^c, or objects of mental speculation, Eusebius calleth them,) handsomely inserted into all his dispensations, to set it out, and to insinuate his meaning about it; that so it might at length shew itself with more solemnity, and less surprise: the most eminent persons therefore, whom he raised up, and employed in his affairs, tending to that end, as they did resemble the Messias, in being instruments of God's par-

^c Euseb. Hist. Eccl. i. 2. [Tom. i. p. 9.]

ticular grace and providence, (being, indeed, inferior
 Christs and Mediators, partial Saviours and Re-
 deemers of his people, as they are sometimes called);
 so they were ordered in several circumstances of
 their persons, in divers actions they performed, in
 the principal accidents befalling them, to represent
 him: (becoming *εἰκονικοὶ Χριστοὶ*, *Christs in image*^d,
 as Eusebius again styleth them:) the rites also and
 services of Religion instituted by them in God's
 name were adapted to the same purpose; they and
 all things about them, by God's especial direction
 and wise care, being fitted so as to be congruous
 emblems and shadows prefiguring Christ, and
 whatever appertained to him^e: thus was Adam,
 as St Paul calleth him, *A type of Christ*; and Abel,
 Melchisedec, Isaac, Moses, Joshua, David, Solo-
 mon, Zorobabel are intimated to have been such;
 the most signal things done by them, or befalling
 them, having been suited to answer somewhat re-
 markable concerning him; so that we may say of
 them all, as the Apostle to the Hebrews did of the
 Jewish priests, *They served to the subindication*
and shadowing of heavenly things^f. In David
 particularly this relation is so plain, that because
 thereof, in the Prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and
 Hosea, the Messiah is called by his name, as if he
 were revived in the Messiah. It, indeed, well
 suited the dignity of this great personage, and the
 importance of his business, that he should have
 appointed so notable heralds and harbingers to go

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Ps. cv. 15.
Isai. xlv. 1.
Heb. viii. 6.
Gal. iii. 19.
Neh. ix.
27.
Acts vii.
35.

Heb. viii. 5.
Exod. xxv.
40.

Rom. v. 14.

Heb. viii. 5.
Jer. xxx. 9.
Hos. iii. 5.
Ezek.
xxxiv. 23;
24; xxxvii.
24, 25.

Heb. viii. 5;
x. 1; ix. 23.

^d [Οὗς καὶ αὐτοὺς νεύματι θείῳ Προφήται χρίοντες, εἰκονικοὺς τινὰς Χριστοὺς ἀπειργάζοντο.—I. 3. Tom. i. p. 12.]

^e Vid. Euseb. ibid.

^f Οἷτινες ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ λατρεύουσι τῶν ἐπουρανίων.—Heb. viii. 5.

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Gal. iv. 24.
Col. ii. 17.

1 Cor. x.

II, 6.

1 Pet. i. 12.

before his face ; furnished with conspicuous ensigns and badges denoting their relation to him. It was proper, that God should appear to have had always an express regard toward him : it consequently doth serve to our edification ; for that we duly comparing things, and espying this admirable correspondency, may be instructed thereby, and established in our faith ; may be excited to the admiration of God's wisdom, so harmoniously connecting things, and of his goodness, so provident for our welfare ; may also be induced thereby the more highly to adore the Messiah, and to esteem his design : such uses St Paul signifieth, when, having compared divers things concerning Moses to things concerning Christ, he saith, *All these things happened as types, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come.*

It is also (both for illustration and proof of these things) to be observed, that because those eminent servants of God were representatives of Christ, many things are spoken of them, as such ; many things are ascribed to them, which only, or chiefly, were intended of him ; their names are used as veils to cover divers things concerning him, which it seemed to divine wisdom not so convenient, in a more open and clear manner, to disclose promiscuously to all men. That this observation is true ; that, I say, under the names of persons representing Christ (or of things, we may add, adumbrating his things) many things are intimated principally concerning him and his dispensations, may be collected and confirmed from hence, that many things are attributed to persons (and

to things also) which do not agree to them ; many things were promised which appear never accomplished, except after an improper and hyperbolical manner of expression, or according to an enormous wideness of interpretation ; such as do not well seem to suit the nature of true histories and serious promises : thus, for instance, many things are foretold concerning the large extent and prosperous state of the Jewish Church ; which history and experience do testify never (according to strictness of literal acception, yea not in any tolerable degree, near the height of what the words import) to have come to pass : thus also, as the Apostle to the Hebrews argueth, effects are attributed to the Jewish rites and sacrifices, which according to the nature of things cannot belong to them, otherwise than as substitutes and shadows of things more high in substance and efficacy : thus also what is with solemn oath promised to Solomon (concerning the vast extent and endless duration of his empire in righteousness, peace, and prosperity ; together with his mighty acts, and successful achievements) doth not appear directly in any competent measure to have been accomplished : thus also David (as St Peter in the second of the Acts observeth, and groundeth his argumentation on it) speaketh divers things of himself, which cannot be conceived properly and literally agreeable to him : such things therefore (having some truth under them) are reasonably supposed to be intimations of somewhat appertaining to the future more perfect state of things under the Messiah ; to concern him (who was to be *The end of the law*) and his dispensation, which was to be the accomplishment of all things

SERM.
LXII.Isai. xxv.
7, 8.

Heb. x. 4.

Ps. xlv.
lxxii ;
lxxxiii. &c.

Acts ii. 29.

Rom. x. 4.
Luke xxii.
37.

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1 Pet. i. 10,
&c.

predicted and presignified: this is that which St Austin signifieth, when he saith of Christ, that *Him all the promises of the Jewish nation, all their prophecies, priesthoods, sacrifices, their temple, and all their sacraments whatever did resound, or express^g.*

Neither are these things only said according to suppositions assumed in the New Testament; but they agree, as to their general importance, to the sense of the ancient Jews, who did conceive such mysterious references often to lie couched under the letter of the Scriptures: they did suppose every where a *Midrash*, or mystical sense; which they very studiously (even to an excess of curiosity and diligence) searched after: it was a constant and confident opinion of their doctors, that all things in Moses's law were typical^h, and capable of allegorical exposition; and Philo's writings (composed immediately after our Saviour's times) do shew that opinion then to have been passable. We have also several instances and intimations thereof in the New Testament: neither is it probable, that our Lord and the Apostles would, in their discourses and disputations with the Jews, have used this way of alleging and interpreting passages of Scripture, if they in general had not admitted and approved it.

Why God should choose to express matters of this nature in such a manner, we need not to

^g Quem Christum—omnia gentis illius promissa, omnes prophetiæ, sacerdotia, sacrificia, templum, et cuncta omnino sacramenta sonuerunt.—Aug. ad Volus. [Ep. cxxxvii. Opp. Tom. ii. col. 408 E.]

^h Vid. Capell. in Exerc. ad Zohar. [Comment. et Notæ Crit. p. 310 et seqq.—Amst. 1689.]

determineⁱ; it might be perhaps for reasons only known to himself, above our ken or cognizance: yet divers probable reasons may be assigned for it, yea some more than probable, seeing they are expressed or hinted in Scripture. It might be for a decent and harmonious discrimination of times, of dispensations, of persons; it might be from the depth of things to conciliate reverence to them, and to raise the price of knowing them, by the difficulty of attaining thereto; it might be by exercise to improve the understandings of men, to inflame their desire, to excite their industry, to provoke their devotion, to render them modest and humble; it might be for occasion to reward an honest and diligent study of God's word, and to convey special gifts of interpretation; it might be to conceal some things from some persons unworthy or unfit to know them, especially from haughty and self-conceited persons; it might be to use the ignorance of some as a means to produce some great events; such as was the misusing and persecuting our Lord: for such reasons it might be, and there is no good reason against it; for it cannot be supposed necessary, that all things should be plainly discovered at all times, and to all persons; it is evident that some things are couched in parabolical and mysterious expressions; it is particularly the manner of prophetic instruction frequently to involve things, the full and clear knowledge of which is not congruous to every season, nor suitable to every capacity; but reserved for times, and persons, for which the divine wisdom only knows them most proper.

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Rev. ii. 7;
xiii. 18;
xvii. 9.
Matt. xiii.
9; xxiv. 15.
Dan. ix. 1.
John v. 39.
Luke xxiv.
45.
1 Cor. xii.
10; xiv. 26.
Eph. i. 9,
10.
Matt. xiii.
13; xi. 25;
vii. 6.
1 Cor. ii. 8.
Acts iii. 17.

Gal. iv. 4.
Eph. i. 10.
1 Tim. ii. 6.

ⁱ Vid. Chrys. Opp. Tom. vi. pp. 649, 658.

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These things being thus premised, we come to our particular case, and say, that (according to what our Lord and his Apostles teach) the Messiah's being to suffer was in divers passages of the ancient Scripture prefigured. Supposing the thing itself determined to be, there are peculiar reasons, why it rather so, than in a more open manner, should be represented, contained in those words of Tertullian^k: *The sacrament indeed, saith he, of Christ's passion ought to have been figured in the (ancient) predication; forasmuch as that the more incredible it was (if it should have been preached nakedly,) the more offensive it would have been; and the more magnificent it was, the more it was to be overshadowed, that the difficulty of understanding it might be cause of seeking of God's grace.* Supposing it also that it should be, it is plain that the passages about Abel, Isaac, Josias, Jeremy, and the like, may congruously be applied thereto; that the elevation of the brazen serpent, and the slaying the paschal lamb may appositely represent it; the Jewish priests, with all their sacrifices, may also with reason be brought in, and accommodated thereto: these things, indeed, by themselves solitarily are not apt peremptorily to evince that it should be; yet do they handsomely suit it, and adorn the supposition thereof; according to the notion premised about the figurative relation between the matters of the old world before the Messiah, and the new one after him. But with a

^k Utique sacramentum passionis ipsius figurari in prædicationibus oportuerat, quantoque incredibile, tanto magis scandalum futurum, si nude prædicaretur: quantoque magnificum, tanto magis obumbrandum, ut difficultas intellectus gratiam Dei quæreret.—Tertull. adv. Jud. cap. x. [Opp. p. 195 c.]

clearer evidence and stronger force we may affirm, that the Messiah's sufferings were implied in the afflictions ascribed to his representative, king David, such as he in several Psalms (in the 35th, 69th, 109th, 118th, and especially in the 22d Psalm) describeth them; wherein divers passages, expressing the extreme sadness and forlornness of his condition, occur, which by the history of his life do not so well, according to the literal signification of words, appear congruous to his person; which therefore there is a necessity, or at least much reason, that they should be applied to the Messias, whom that holy king did represent.

Which being admitted, comparing the passages we find there to that which befell Jesus, we may observe an admirable harmony; there being scarce any part of his affliction in his life, or any circumstance thereof at his death, which is not in express and emphatical terms there set out. There we have expressed his low and despicable estate; *I am a worm, and no man; the reproach of men, and despised of the people:*—the causeless hatred and enmity of the populace and of the great ones toward him; *They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head; they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty; they compassed me about with words of hatred, and fought against me without a cause:*—the ingrateful requital for all the good intended and performed by him; *They rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love:*—their rejecting him; *The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner:*—their insidious

SERM.
LXII.

Ps. xxii. 6;

lxix. 4;
xxxv. 7;
cix. 3;

xxxv. 12;
cix. 5;

cxviii. 22.

SERM.
LXII.Ps. xxxv.
7, 11; cix.
2;xxxv. 15;
lxi. 26;

xxii. 7, 8;

cix. 25;
xxxv. 21,
16;xxii. 16,
17;

lxi. 21.

and calumnious proceedings against him; *Without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul. And, False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not. And, The mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me; they have spoken against me with a lying tongue:—their bitter insulting over him in his affliction; But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together; yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me: They persecute him whom thou hast smitten, and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded: καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ ἄλγος τῶν τραυμάτων μου προσέθηκαν, and to the smart of my wounds they have added; (say the LXX.)—their scornful reviling, flouting, and mocking him; All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighteth in him. And, I became a reproach unto them; when they looked upon me, they shook their heads: They opened their mouth wide against me, and said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it. Ἐπείρασάν με, ἐξεμυκτήρισάν με μυκτηρισμὸν, ἔβρυξαν ἐπ' ἐμὲ τοὺς ὀδόντας αὐτῶν; They tempted me, they extremely mocked me, they gnashed their teeth upon me:—their cruel and contemptuous usage of him; Dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones; they look and stare upon me:—their abusive dealing with him, when he in his distress called for some refreshment; They gave me gall for my meat, and*

in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink:—their disposal of his garments upon his suffering; They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture:—his being deserted of his friends and followers, and thence destitute of all consolation; I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children; I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none:—the sense of God's withholding his favour and help; My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me?—his charitable disposition and demeanour toward his enemies and persecutors; But as for me, when they were sick, (when they did trouble me, ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ παρενοχλεῖν μοι; say the LXX.) my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled myself with fasting, and my prayer returned into my own bosom. I behaved myself as though it had been my friend or brother; I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother. Which passages, and the like, how patly and punctually they do square to respective passages in the Gospels, I need not to shew; we do, I presume, all of us well enough remember that both most doleful and comfortable history, to be able ourselves to make the application.

But there, further, are not only such oblique intimations, or significations of this matter, shrouded under the coverture of other persons and names; but very direct and immediate predictions concerning the Messiah's being to suffer, most clearly expressed: that whole famous chapter (the 53d) of Isaiah doth most evidently and fully declare

SERM.
LXII.Ps. xxii.
18;

lxix. 8, 20;

xxii. 1;
lxix. 17;xxxv. 13,
14.

Isai. liii.

SERM.
LXII.

it, wherein the kind, manner, causes, ends, and consequences of his sufferings, together with his behaviour under them, are graphically represented: his appearing meanness; *He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him:*—the disgrace, contempt, repulses, and rejection he underwent; *He is despised and rejected of men—we hid our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not:*—his afflicted state; *He is a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted:*—the bitter and painful manner of his affliction; *He was stricken; He bare stripes; He was wounded and bruised:*—his being accused, adjudged, and condemned as a malefactor; *He was taken from prison and from judgment—he was numbered among the transgressors:*—his death consequent; *He poured out his soul unto death; he was cut off, out of the land of the living:*—the design and end of his sufferings; they were appointed and inflicted by divine providence for our sake, and in our stead; for the expiation of our sins, and our salvation; *It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin—he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed—surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows—for the transgression of my people he was stricken—the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all:*—his sustaining all this with a willing, quiet, humble patience, and perfect meekness; *He was oppressed,*

and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; SERM. LXII.
 he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a
 sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened
 not his mouth:—his charitable praying for his
 persecutors, and designing their welfare, *He made* Isai. liii. 12;
intercession for the transgressors:—the blessed
 consequences and happy success of his sufferings,
 in the conversion and justification of men; in per-
 forming God's will and work; in being satisfied,
 rewarded, and exalted himself; *He shall see his* ver. 10, 11, 12.
seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure
of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall
see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied:
by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify
many:—*I will divide him a portion with the great,*
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong: which
 passages, as they do most exactly suit unto Jesus,
 and might in a sort constitute a true historical
 narration of what he did endure, together with
 the doctrines delivered in the Gospel concerning
 the intents and effects of his sufferings, so that
 they did, according to the intention of the Divine
 Spirit, relate to the Messiah, may from several
 considerations be made apparent; the context and
 coherence of all this passage with the matters
 precedent and subsequent, the which plainly do
 respect the Messiah and his times, do argue it;
How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of lii. 7, 13;
him that bringeth good tidings! and, *Behold, my*
servant shall deal prudently, &c. are passages im-
 mediately going before; to which this chapter is
 knit in way of continuation; and immediately after
 it doth follow, *Sing, O barren, thou that didst not* liv. 1, &c.
bear, &c. being a no less perspicuous than elegant

SERM.
LXII.

description of the Church, enlarged by accession of the Gentiles, which was to be brought to pass by the Messias. The general scope of this whole prophecy enforceth the same conclusion; and the incongruity of this particular prediction to any other person imaginable beside the Messias doth further evince it; so high are the things ascribed to the suffering person; as that *He should bear the sins of all God's people, and heal them*; that *He should by his knowledge justify many*, (or the multitude;) that *The pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand* to these grand purposes; that *God would divide him a portion with the great, and that he should divide the spoil with the strong*: the magnificency and importance of which sayings (rightly understood and weighed) do well agree to the Messias, but not to any other person or simple man: whence if the ancient Jews had reason to believe a Messias was to come, (as they with general consent did suppose they had,) they had as much reason to apply this place, as any other, to him, and thence to acknowledge, that he was designed to be an eminent sufferer. And, indeed, divers of the ancient Targumists and most learned Rabbins did expound this place of the one Messias, which was to come; as the *Pugio fidei*, and other learned writers, do by several express testimonies declare. This place also discovereth the vanity of that figment devised by some later Jews; who, to evade it, and to oppose Jesus, have affirmed there was to be a double Messias; one, who should be much afflicted; another, who should greatly prosper; since we may observe, that here both great afflictions and glorious per-

formances concurrently are ascribed to the same person. SERM.
LXII.

The same things are by parts also clearly foretold in other places of this Prophet, and in other prophetical Scriptures; by Isaiah again in the chapter immediately preceding, *Behold, saith God* Isai. lii.
13, 14; *there, my servant shall deal prudently; he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high: there is God's servant (he, who in way of excellency is such, that is, in the style of this Prophet, the Messiah) in his real glorious capacity. It followeth concerning his external appearance; His visage was so marred more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men. And again, in the 49th chapter; Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer* xlix. 7; *of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship. What can be more express and clear, than that it is signified here that the Messiah, who should subject the world, with its sovereign powers, to the acknowledgment and veneration of himself, was to be despised by men, to be detested by the Jewish people, to appear in a servile and base condition? The same Prophet doth again, in the 50th chapter, bring him in speaking thus: I gave my back to the smiters, and* 1. 6; *my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting. His offending the Jews, so as thereby to aggravate their sins, and accelerate their punishments, is also thus expressed by the same Prophet: And he shall be* viii. 14.
Ps. ii. 2. *for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel,*

SERM. LXII. *for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.*

The Prophet Zechariah doth also in several places very roundly express his sufferings, his low
 Zech. ix. 9; condition in those words; *Behold, thy King cometh unto thee; lowly, and riding upon an ass; (that is, pauper, mean and sorry to appearance.)* His
 xiii. 7; manner of death in those words: *Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.* And again;
 xii. 10. *I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn, &c.*
 The Prophet Daniel also in that place, from which probably the name Messias was taken, and which
 Dan. ix. 26. most expressly mentioneth him, saith, that *After sixty-two weeks the Messias shall be cut off, but not for himself.* Now from all these passages of Scripture (beside divers others to the same purpose, observable by those whose industry is assisted by Divine illumination) we may well conclude with
 Luke xxiv. 46. our Lord, Ὅτι οὕτω γέγραπται, καὶ οὕτως ἔδει παθεῖν τὸν Χριστόν, *That thus it was written, and thus (according to the Prophet's foreshewing) it was to happen, that the Christ should suffer; suffer in a life of penury and disgrace, in a death of sorrow and shame.*

That it was to fall out thus, might also be well inferred by reasons grounded upon the qualities of the Messiah's person, and upon the nature of his performances, such as they are described in prophetical Scripture: he was to be really, and plainly

to appear, a person of most admirable virtue and goodness; but never (as even pagan philosophers¹ have observed) was, or can there be any such without undergoing the trial of great affliction. He was to be an universal pattern to men of all sorts (especially to the greatest part of men, that is, to the poor and afflicted) of all righteousness; to exemplify particularly the most difficult pieces of duty; (humility, patience, meekness, charity, self-denial, entire resignation to God's will :) this he should not have had opportunity or advantage of doing, should he have been high, wealthy, splendid, and prosperous in secular matters: he was to exercise great pity and sympathy toward all mankind; toward the doing which it was requisite that he should himself taste and feel the inconveniences, troubles, pains, and sorrows incident to us. He was to advance the repute of spiritual goods and eternal blessings, depressing the value of these corporeal and temporal things, which men do so fondly admire and dote on^m: the most compendious and effectual way of doing which was by an exemplary neglect or rejection of worldly glories and enjoyments; refusing the honours, profits, and pleasures here adjoined to a high state. He was by the most kindly, gentle, and peaceable means to erect a spiritual kingdom; by pure force of reason to subdue the hearts and consciences of

SERM.
LXII.Matt. iii.
15.

¹ Plato [ὁ δίκαιος μαστιγώσεται, στρεβλώσεται, δεδήσεται, ἐκκαυθήσεται τῷ φθαλμῷ, τελευτῶν πάντα κακὰ παθὼν ἀνασκιन्दυλευθήσεται.—De Rep. II. 361 E.]

Seneca [Magnum exemplum, nisi mala fortuna, non invenit.—De Prov. cap. III. 5.]

^m Vide Theodoti Orat. in Eph. Concil. [apud Bin. Conc. Tom. II. p. 535.]

SERM.
LXII.

Heb. vii.
25.

men to the love and obedience of God; by wise instruction to raise in us the hopes of future recompenses in heaven; to the accomplishment of which purposes temporal glory (working on the carnal apprehensions and affections of men) had rather been prejudicial than conducive. He was to accomplish and manage his great designs by means supernatural and divine, the which would surely become more conspicuous by the visible meanness and impotency of his state. He was also most highly to merit from God, for himself and for us; (to merit God's high approbation of what he did, God's favour and grace to us;) this he could not perform so well, as by willingly enduring, for God's sake, and in our behalf, the most hard and grievous things. He was, in fine, designed perfectly to save us, and consequently to appease God's wrath, to satisfy divine justice, to expiate our sins; whereto it was requisite that he should undergo what we had deserved, being punished and afflicted for us.

Now that Jesus our Lord did most thoroughly correspond to whatever is in this kind declared by the Prophets concerning the Messias, we need not, by minutely relating the known history of his life and death, make out any further, since the whole matter is palpably notorious, and no adversary can deny it: I shall therefore conclude, that it is a clear and certain truth, which St Peter in our text affirmeth, that *Those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his Prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.*

Rev. i. 5,
6.

Now, *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us*

kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. SERM.
LXII.
Amen.

Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, Rev. v. 13.
be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto
the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON LXIII.

A WHIT-SUNDAY SERMON OF THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

ACTS II. 38.

And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

SERM.
LXIII.

Esth. ix.
22.
Deut. xvi.

AMONG the divers reasonable grounds and ends of the observing festival solemnities, (such as are comforting the poor by hospitable relief, refreshing the weary labourer by cessation from ordinary toil, maintaining good-will among neighbours by cheerful and free conversation, quickening our spirits and raising our fancies by extraordinary representations and divertisements, infusing and preserving good humour in people^a; such as are also the decent conspiring in public expressions of special reverence to God, withdrawing our minds from secular cares, and engaging them to spiritual meditations,) the two principal designs of them seem to be these:

I The affording occasion (or rather imposing a constraint upon us) with a competent frequency to attend unto, to consider upon, to instruct ourselves and others in the mysterious doctrines and institutions of our Religion.

^a Θεοὶ δὲ οἰκτεῖραντες τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπίπονον πεφυκὸς γένος, ἀναπαύλας τε αὐτοῖς τῶν πόνων ἐτάξαντο, τὰς τῶν ἐορτῶν ἀμοιβὰς τοῖς θεοῖς.—Plato. de Leg. II. [653 D.]

Legum conditores festos instituerunt dies, ut ad hilaritatem homines publice cogarentur; tanquam necessarium laboribus interponentes temperamentum.—Sen. de Tranq. An. cap. xv. [12.]

2 The engaging us seasonably to practise that great duty of thankfully remembering and praising God for those eminent mercies and favours, which by his great grace and goodness have been vouchsafed to us.

For these purposes chiefly did God himself appoint the Jewish festivals; for instance, the Passover, the reason of which being instituted is thus expressed; *That thou mayest remember the day, when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt, all the days of thy life:* which words imply, that the observation of that solemnity did serve to preserve the memory, yea the continual remembrance of that so notable a blessing, which otherwise might have been totally forgotten, or seldom considered; the same did also suggest occasion of inquiry concerning the reasons of its appointment, procuring consequently needful information in that material point of their Religion; as doth appear by those words of God, *And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover—*

Deut. xvi.

3.

Exod. xii.
26, 27.

In compliance with which prudent designs^b, the Christian Church, from her first infancy, hath embraced the opportunity of recommending to her children the observation of her chief holy festivals, continuing the time, and retaining the name, although changing or improving the matter and reason of those ancient ones; the divine providence concurring to further such proceeding, by so

^b Aug. de Civ. Dei, x. 3. [Ei beneficiorum ejus solennitatibus festis et diebus statutis dicamus sacramusque memoriam, ne volumine temporum ingrata subrepat oblivio.]

SERM.
LXIII.

ordering the events of things, that the seasons of dispensing the evangelical blessings should fall in with those, wherein the legal benefits most resembling and representing them were commemorated; that so there might be as well a happy coincidence of time, as correspondence in matter between the ancient and new solemnities; whence as the exhibition of evangelical doctrines and mysteries did meet with minds more suitably prepared to entertain them, and as less innovation from former usage did appear, (a thing observable to be respected in most, or all the positive institutions of our Religion,) so withal Christians were engaged, while they considered the fresh great mercies by God vouchsafed to them, to reflect also upon the favours, from the same stock of goodness, indulged by him to his ancient people; that as those should chiefly be remembered, so these should not wholly be forgotten: thus did God dispose, that our Saviour should then suffer, when the paschal lamb was to be offered; or that the redemption of the world from sin and misery should then be celebrated by us, when the deliverance from the Egyptian slavery was commemorated by them: and so (that we may approach to our purpose) at the time of Pentecost, when the Jews were obliged

Deut. xvi.
11. to rejoice before the Lord, rendering thanks unto him for the harvest newly gathered in, and the earth's good fruits (the main supports and comforts of this life) were by God's blessing bestowed on them, then did God bountifully impart the first-fruits of his holy Spirit, the food of our souls and refreshment of our hearts; then did he cause his labourers to put their sickle into the spiritual

harvest ; converting souls, and gathering them as mature fruits into the garners of the Church. SERM.
LXIII.

At the very season also (which is remarkable) that the Law was delivered to the Jews, and the ancient covenant established, which did happen at Pentecost, as may be probably collected from the text, and is commonly supposed by the Jewish doctors, who therefore called this feast שמחת תורה, *The joy* (or joyful feast) *of the Law*, in signification of their joy, using then to crown their heads with garlands, and strew their houses with green herbs ; at that very time was the Christian law most signally promulged, and the new covenant's ratification most solemnly declared by the miraculous effusion of the divine Spirit.

The benefit therefore and blessing, which at this time we are bound especially to consider and commemorate, is in effect the publication and establishment of the covenant evangelical, the foundation of all our hopes, and all our claims to happiness^c ; but more immediately and directly the donation of the Holy Spirit to the Christian Church, and to all its members ; for the better understanding and more truly valuing of which most excellent benefit, let us briefly declare the nature and design thereof.

Almighty God, seeing the generality of mankind alienated from himself by gross ignorance of its duty toward him, and by habitual inclinations to violate his holy laws, (originally implanted by him in our nature, or anciently revealed to our

^c Πεντηκοστὴν ἐορτάζομεν, καὶ Πνεύματος ἐπιδημίαν, καὶ προθεσμίαν ἐπαγγελίας, καὶ ἐλπίδος συμπλήρωσιν, &c.—Greg. Naz. [Orat. xli. Opp. Tom. i. p. 735 A.]

SERM.
LXIII.

first parents,) immersed in error, enslaved to vice, and obnoxious to the woful consequences of them, severe punishment and extreme misery; was pleased in his immense goodness and pity to design its rescue from that sad condition; and in pursuance of that gracious design, did resolve upon expedients the most admirable and most efficacious that could be: for to redeem men from the tyranny of sin and hell, to reconcile them to himself, to recover them into a happy state, he sent his own only beloved Son out of his bosom into this world, clothed with our nature; by him, as by a plenipotentiary commissioner from himself, inviting all men to return unto him; declaring himself, by the meritorious obedience, the expiatory passion, the effectual intercession of his dear Son, abundantly satisfied for, and ready to grant a full pardon of all offences committed against him in their state of error and estrangement; to admit them into a state of present indemnity and peace, yea to settle them in perpetual alliance and friendship with himself, upon most fair and gentle terms; namely, that, renouncing their erroneous principles and reforming their vicious courses of life, they cheerfully would embrace his merciful overtures, and thereafter conform their lives to his righteous laws; the which, together with all his good intentions concerning them, he, by the same blessed agent, clearly discovered to them; fully by him instructing them in their duty, and strongly encouraging them to the performance thereof by the promise of most bountiful rewards; his certain love and favour attended with endless joy and bliss: thus

Tit. ii. 11,
12. *Did, as St Paul expresseth it, the saving grace of*

God appear unto all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, expecting that blessed hope.

SERM.
LXIII.

But to render this wonderfully gracious design successful, in a way of wisdom and reasonable proceeding accommodated to the capacities of human nature, it was requisite, that there should be provided convincing arguments to persuade men of the truth and reality of these things, (that, indeed, such an extraordinary agent, with such a message, was come from heaven,) effectual means of admonishing and exciting men to a heedful advertency toward them, competent motives to a cordial acceptance of them; a power also sufficient, notwithstanding their natural impotency and instability, to continue them in the belief, to uphold them in the practice of the duties prescribed, in the performance of the conditions required.

For if it were not very credible, that God had truly those intentions toward us, or if we did not much regard the overture of them, or if we did not conceive the business highly to concern us; or if, resolving to comply with the Gospel, we yet were unable to discharge the conditions thereof, the design would totally be frustrated, and of itself come to nothing. To prevent which disappointment of his merciful intentions, Almighty God did abundantly provide, in a manner and measure suitable to the glorious importance of them; for to the ministry of his eternal wisdom, he adjoined the efficacy of his eternal love, and blessed Spirit; the which not only conducted God our Saviour into his fleshly tabernacle, and with unmeasurable

John iii.
34.

SERM.
LXIII.

communications of himself did continually reside with-
in him, but also did attend him in the conspicuous
performance of numberless miraculous works, im-
plying divine power and goodness, as exceeding
not only any natural, but all created power, (such
as were by mere word and will healing the sick
and restoring the maimed, ejecting evil spirits,
discerning the secret thoughts of men, foretelling
contingent events, reviving the dead, raising him-
self from the grave;) which works, some expressly,
others by parity of reason, are ascribed to the
Holy Spirit; for, *If, saith our Lord, I by the*
Spirit of God cast out devils—and, *God, saith St*
Peter, anointed him with the Holy Ghost, and with
power; who went about doing good, and healing
all that were oppressed by the Devil: and, *Who,*
saith St Paul, was declared to be the Son of God,
according to the Holy Spirit, by the resurrection
from the dead: so did God afford the most evi-
dent attestation that could be to the truth of our
Saviour's quality, commission, and doctrine; by so
clear and rousing significations did God invite men
to take notice of these things.

But further to induce them heartily to comply
with these gracious overtures, and to render them
thoroughly available to the purpose designed, the
salvation of men, according to the terms prescribed
of faith in God, and obedience to his command-
ments, God was pleased further to resolve, and he
faithfully did promise, that he would impart the
same blessed Spirit, as a continual guide and as-
sistant to all those, who seriously would entertain
those tenders of mercy, sincerely resolving the per-
formance of the conditions.

Now although the natural and ordinary manner of this divine Spirit's operation (like that of all spirits and more subtle substances) is not by violent and sensible impressions, but rather in way of imperceptible penetration, or gentle insinuating of itself into the subject upon which it worketh, hardly discovering itself otherwise than by the notable effects resulting from it; and although likewise the proper and principal effects thereof, according to divine designation, do relate to the furthering our performance of the said conditions requisite toward our salvation, that is, to the cherishing our faith and quickening our obedience^d; disposing men to perform virtuous actions, rather than to achieve wondrous exploits; yet more fully to satisfy the doubtful, to convince the incredulous (to confound the obstinate) world about the truth of his intentions, more illustriously to manifest the completion of his promise, more surely to fortify the faithful against the scandals and temptations, which their profession would incur, God was pleased after our Lord's ascension, and when the apostolical promulgation of the Christian doctrine did commence, to dispense both to the teachers and the disciples thereof more liberal communications of that Holy Spirit, attended with notorious, strange, and wonderful effects^e, apt to provoke the admiration of men,

Acts ii. 12,
43; iv. 14;
ix. 11, 16.
1 Cor. xiv.
25.

^d Καὶ γὰρ καὶ σὺν θείας ἀπέλαυσας χάριτος βαπτιζόμενος, καὶ Πνεύματος μετέσχες, εἰ καὶ μὴ πρὸς τὸ τὰ σημεῖα ποιεῖν, ἀλλ' ὅσον ἀρκεῖ πρὸς τὸ πολιτείαν ὀρθήν, καὶ ἡκριβωμένην λαβεῖν.—Chrys. ad Demet. Opp. Tom. vi. [p. 148.]

^e Τῶν γὰρ χαρισμάτων τῶν πνευματικῶν τὰ μὲν ἀόρατά ἐστι, καὶ πίστει καταλαμβάνεται μόνη· τὰ δὲ καὶ αἰσθητὸν ἐνδείκνυται σημεῖον πρὸς τὴν τῶν ἀπίστων πληροφορίαν.—Id. Tom. v. Orat. LXXXVIII. [p. 606.]

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to persuade their judgments, to prevail upon their affections, to produce within them strong desires of partaking so high a privilege and excellent endowment.

The memorial therefore of that most gracious and glorious dispensation, the Christian Church wisely and piously hath continually preserved, obliging us at this time peculiarly to bless God for that incomparable and inestimable gift, conferred then most visibly upon the Church, and still really bestowed upon every particular member, duly incorporated thereinto.

I say bestowed upon every particular member of the Church; for the evangelical covenant doth extend to every Christian; and a principal ingredient thereof is the collation of this Spirit: which is the finger of God, whereby (according to the Prophet Jeremiah's description of that covenant) *God's law is put into their inward parts, and written in their hearts; Inscribed, as St Paul allusively speaketh, not with ink, but by the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart; not only, as the Jewish law represented, from without to the senses, but impressed within upon the mind and affections; whence God's Spirit is called The Spirit of promise, (τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας,) the donation thereof being the peculiar promise of the Gospel; and the end of our Saviour's undertaking is by St Paul declared, That we might receive the promise of the Spirit by faith, that is, by embracing Christianity might partake thereof, according to God's promise; and the apostolical ministry or exhibition of the Gospel is styled The ministration of the Spirit;*

Luke xi. 20.
Jer. xxxi. 33.
2 Cor iii. 3.
Heb. viii. 10.
Ezek. xi. 19.
John vi. 45.
Eph. i. 13.
Gal. iii. 14.
2 Cor. iii. 8.

(ἡ διακονία τοῦ Πνεύματος); and tasting of the heavenly gift, and participation of the Holy Ghost is part of a Christian's charter; and the susception of Christianity is thus described by St Paul; *But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath chosen you from the beginning to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:* and our Saviour instructed Nicodemus, that *No man can enter into the kingdom of God* (that is, become a Christian, or subject of God's spiritual kingdom) *without being regenerated by water, and by the Spirit, that is, without baptism, and the spiritual grace attending it; according as St Peter doth in the words adjoining to our text imply, that the reception of the Holy Spirit is annexed to holy baptism: Repent, saith he, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise* (that great promise of the Holy Ghost) *is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call; that is, the Holy Spirit is promised to all, how far soever distant in place or time, whoever shall be invited unto, and shall embrace the Christian profession. St John also maketh it to be the distinctive mark of those, in whom Christ abideth, and who dwell in Christ, that is, of all true Christians, to have this Spirit; Hereby, saith he, we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us; and, Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And St Paul denieth him to be*

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Heb. vi. 4.

2 Thess. ii.

13.

John iii. 5.

Acts ii. 38,

39.

1 John iii.

24;

iv. 13.

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Rom. viii.
9.
1 Cor. iii.
16.

Tit. iii. 4,
5.

Gal. v. 22.
Eph. v. 9.

1 Cor. xii.
13.

a good Christian who is destitute thereof; *Now, saith he, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his: and, Know ye not, saith he to the Corinthians, that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? that is, Do ye not understand this to be a common privilege of all Christians, such as ye profess yourselves to be? And the conversion of men to Christianity he thus expresseth; After the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared; not by any righteous works which we had done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the laver of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. And all pious dispositions qualifying us for entrance into heaven and happiness (faith, charity, devotion, every grace, every virtue) are represented to be fruits of the Holy Spirit: and the union of all Christians into one body, the catholic society of all truly faithful people, doth, according to St Paul, result from this one Spirit, as a common soul animating and actuating them: For, saith he, by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free; and have all been made to drink of one Spirit.*

In fine, whatever some few persons, or some petty sects (as the Pelagians of old, the Socinians now) may have deemed, it hath been the doctrine constantly, and with very general consent delivered in the Catholic Church, that to all persons by the holy mystery of baptism duly initiated to Christianity, or admitted into the communion of Christ's body, the grace of God's Holy Spirit certainly is bestowed, enabling them to perform the conditions

of piety and virtue then undertaken by them; enlightening their minds, rectifying their wills, purifying their affections, directing and assisting them in their practice; the which holy gift (if not abused, ill treated, driven away, or quenched by their ill behaviour) will perpetually be continued, improved, and increased to them: it is therefore by Tertullian^f (in his *Prescriptions against heretics*) reckoned as part of that fundamental rule, which was grounded upon the general tradition and consent of the Christian Church, that *Christ had sent the virtue of the Holy Ghost in his room, which doth act believers*; to which that article doth answer of the Apostolical Creed, in which we profess to believe the Holy Ghost; meaning, I suppose, thereby, not only the bare existence of the Holy Ghost, but also its gracious communication and energy.

Since therefore the collation of this eminent gift and favour so nearly doth concern us all; seeing it is our present duty more especially to praise and bless God for it; seeing also we are wont to commensurate our gratitude to our estimation of the benefit unto which it relateth; let us a little consider the worth and excellency of this divine gift conferred on us.

That it is transcendently valuable, we may in general hence collect, that even in our Lord's esteem it did not only countervail, but in a manner surmount the benefit of his presence; *It is*, John xvi. said he, *expedient* (or profitable) *for you that I*⁷ *go away*; God having designed, that my absence

^f Misisse vicariam vim Spiritus Sancti, qui credentes agat.
—[cap. XIII. Opp. p. 207 A.]

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shall be supplied by the Comforter's more beneficial presence: and wonderfully beneficial surely must that presence be, which could not only compensate, but render advantageous the loss of that most benign and sweet conversation, that tender and watchful inspection, that wholesome and powerful advice, that clear and lively pattern of all goodness shining forth in our Saviour's life upon his disciples. Could there be a more indulgent Master, a more discreet Guide, a more delightful Companion, a more faithful Friend, a mightier Protector, a surer Assistant, a sweeter Comforter than he? Yes, it seemeth that our Saviour did apprehend, that upon some accounts those benefits with greater advantage might accrue to them by the gift of his Spirit, than by his own immediate presence; that it by internal operation could more clearly inform the mind, more strongly incline the will, more vigorously affect the heart, than any exterior word or example could do: neither could our Saviour, according to the condition of his humanity, limited to particularities of time and place, so perfectly correspond to the various exigencies of mankind, as that omnipotent Spirit, intimately present to, uniformly diffused through all things: him therefore did our Saviour leave the guardian of his otherwise orphan disciples^g; him did he substitute to undergo the care and tuition of them, to conduct them in the right way, to preserve them from dangers, to comfort them in distresses, to manage all their concernments, to be their counsellor, monitor, advocate, and patron; by him he meant fully to make good his word,

^g Οὐκ ἀφήσω ὑμᾶς ὀρφανοὺς.—John xiv. 18.

that he would be with them till the end of this world^h. SERM.
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But more distinctly to survey the many benefits and advantages proceeding from this excellent gift unto us, we may observe, that on it the foundation, the improvement, the completion of all our good and happiness do depend; that to the Holy Spirit in truth and justice are to be ascribed, 1 our better state and being; 2 our spiritual powers and abilities; 3 our good and acceptable performances; whatever we are, whatever we can do, whatever we actually do perform as Christians. Matt.
xxviii. 20.

1 We owe to the Holy Spirit our spiritual state and being; our spiritual life, our freedom, our honourable condition.

It is by virtue of this quickening Spirit, (Πνεῦμα ζωοποιούν,) that from death and corruption we are raised to an immortal and indefectible state of life; that, as St Paul saith, *We that were dead in trespasses and sins, are quickened together with Christ;* 1 Cor. xv.
45.
John vi.
63.
Eph. ii. 1,
5.

We by this incorruptible seed are born again; not, as formerly, to a life of vanity and misery, or to the enjoyment of a few transitory delights, tempered with many vexatious inconveniences, pains, and troubles; but to sure capacities of most solid and durable contentments, *To a living hope of an incorruptible inheritance reserved in heaven for us.* 1 Pet. i. 23;
i. 3, 4.

It is thereby we are free men, enjoying a true and perfect liberty; being enfranchised from divers intolerable slaveries, to which we naturally are subjected, and from which otherwise we could not be exempted; from the dominion of a rigorous law, which prescribeth hard duties, but doth not afford Gal. iv. 24.

^h ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος.—Matt. xxviii. 20.

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strength to perform them; apt to condemn us, but not able to convert usⁱ; from the clamorous accusations of a guilty conscience, with anxious fears of punishment, that *Spirit of bondage unto fear*, of which St Paul speaketh; from the tyranny of a most crafty, spiteful, and cruel enemy, that wicked one who did captivate us at his pleasure, and detained us under his power; from the no less unjust, no less mischievous domination of our own flesh, or natural concupiscence, imposing grievous tasks and destructive necessities upon us; *It is*, saith St Paul, *the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which setteth us free from these laws of sin and of death*; so that, *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom*.

Rom. viii. 15.
2 Tim. ii. 26.
Eph. ii. 2.
Rom. viii. 2.
2 Cor. iii. 17.

From such base thraldoms we thereby are redeemed, and not only so, but are advanced to an honourable condition, are ennobled with illustrious relations, are entitled to glorious privileges: all the benefits and immunities contained in the charter of the new Jerusalem, all the advantages and privileges appropriated to God's court and family thereby appertain unto us; for *We have*, saith St Paul, *access by one Spirit unto the Father*, and *are thence no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God*: by this holy unction we are consecrated *Kings and priests unto God*; by participation of this immortal seed we are engrafted into alliance with the heavenly King, become children of God, brethren of Christ, heirs of paradise, (an infinitely better paradise than that from which we formerly

Eph. ii. 18, 19.
Rev. i. 6.
1 Pet. ii. 9.

ⁱ Lex os omnium potuit obstruere, non potuit mentem convertere.—Ambr. [de Fuga Sæc. cap. III. Opp. Tom. I. col. 424 B.]

were excluded;) for this is that Πνεῦμα υιοθεσίας, SERM. LXIII.
 that Spirit which constituteth us the sons of God, Rom. viii. 15.
 qualifying us to be so by dispositions resembling John i. 13.
 God, and filial affections toward him; certifying
 us that we are so, and causing us by a free instinct
 to cry, *Abba, Father*, running into his bosom of Gal. iv. 6.
 love, and flying under the wings of his mercy in Rom. viii. 15;
 all our needs and distresses; whence *As many as*
are led by the Spirit, they, saith St Paul, *are the* viii. 14;
sons of God; and, *The Spirit itself beareth witness* viii. 16.
with our spirit, that we are the children of God;
 yea, which may seem yet a further pitch of dignity,
 we, by intervention of this Spirit, are united and
 incorporated into Christ himself, being made living
 members of his body, partaking a common life and
 sense with him; by it we are compacted into the
 same spiritual edifice, dedicated to the worship
 and inhabitation of God; our bodies and souls
 are made temples of his divinity, thrones of his
 majesty, orbs of his celestial light, paradises of his
 blissful presence; for, *In whom*, saith St Paul, *ye* Eph. ii. 22.
are built together for an inhabitation of God through
the Spirit; and, *Know ye not that ye are the temple* I Cor. iii. 16.
of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in
you?

By the Holy Spirit we are instated in these
 unconceivably glorious privileges, and by it only
 we are assured of them, to our comfort; the gift
 of it, as it is a great part of them, and the chief
 cause, so it is a sure confirmation and pledge; *Ye*, Eph. i. 13.
 saith St Paul, *were sealed by the Holy Spirit of* Rom. viii. 9, 11.
promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance;
 and, *It is God who did establish us with you in* 2 Cor. i. 21,
Christ, and anointed us, and also sealed us, and 22.

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gave the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts: all which phrases do import the same thing, that is, a comfortable assurance concerning the reality of the benefits by divine grace exhibited and promised to us.

2 Neither only relatively and extrinsically is our state bettered and exalted from death to life, from slavery to freedom, from baseness to dignity; but ourselves answerably are changed and amended by the same Holy Spirit, with a real and intrinsical alteration, transforming us into other things, much different from what we were in our former natural state; by that *Renovation of the Holy Ghost*, of Tit. iii. 5. which St Paul speaketh, *We are, saith he, renewed in the spirit of our mind*; so that not only the decayed frame of our soul is thereby repaired and reformed, but its powers are much improved and enlarged; we are thence endued with new and better faculties, as it were; with quicker apprehensions, with sincerer judgments, with righter inclinations, with nobler passions, than we had before, yea, than we could have had in our original state; so that in the language of Holy Scripture we thence become new men, and new creatures, created according to God in righteousness and true holiness; according to God, that is, in conformity to the divine perfections of rectitude in mind and will, so as to resemble God in a higher degree, and more worthy respects, than formerly. Our father Adam was made *εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν*, a creature endued with life and sense, furnished with powers and appetites, disposing to acquire, preserve, and enjoy the conveniences agreeable to that frame; and we naturally are *ψυχικοὶ ἄνθρωποι*, *animal men*; such

2 Cor. v.
17.

Tit. iii. 5.

Eph. iv. 23;

iv. 24.

2 Cor. v.

17.

Col. iii. 10.

Eph. iv.

23;

ii. 10.

1 Cor. xv.

45;

ii. 14.

as naturally do apprehend, do affect, do pursue things concerning this present life; the pleasures of sense, and the satisfactions of fancy; freedom from want and pain, security from danger and disturbance, together with the means we suppose conducive to those, wealth, honour, and power; these are those *Desires of the flesh and of the mind*, Eph. ii. 3. *θελήματα τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ τῶν διανοιῶν*, the things which according to our natural temper and frame we like and approve; which most men therefore do highly value, passionately love, and earnestly seek: nor doth nature only incline us to a complacency in these things, but customary fruition greatly endeareth them to us; so that we continually improve our acquaintance, and contract a firmer alliance with them; but spiritual and divine things (*The things of the Spirit of God*, *τὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος τοῦ Θεοῦ*, as St Paul calleth them) 1 Cor. ii. 14. we cannot receive; that is, simply of ourselves, without aid of another interior principle, we have no capacity to apprehend them, no disposition to entertain them, no strength to pursue them; *They*, as the Apostle saith, *are foolishness to us*, that is, incongruous to our prejudicate notions, and insipid to our corrupt palates.

Such doctrines as these; that our felicity consisteth not in affluence of temporal enjoyments, but in dispositions of soul crossing our humours, curbing our appetites, and quelling our passions; in conformity of practice to rules distasteful to our sense; in the love and favour of an invisible Being; in reversion of an estate not to be possessed until after our death in another world; that none of these present things do well deserve our serious

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regard, affection, or care, and that it is blameable to be solicitous about them; that naked goodness (how low, weak, and poor soever) is to be chosen before all the specious pomps and glories of this world; that the secret testimony of conscience is to be preferred before all the approbation and applause of men; that the hope of future joy should oversway the desire of present most certain and sensible delights; that the loss of all things may sometime be deemed our greatest gain, being contemned our highest honour, enduring afflictions our most desirable condition, death our surest welfare, a cross preferable to a crown; that accordingly it is often advantageous and expedient for us, and a duty incumbent on us, willingly to discard our dearest contents of life, to sacrifice our most valued interest, to forsake our nearest relations, to refuse what we most affect, to undertake what we most distaste, to undergo without reluctance or regret the most bitter accidents that can befall us; that we must (to use the holy style) hate our own souls, deny ourselves, and take up our cross, quit houses and lands, desert kindred and friends; renounce, or bid farewell to, all that we have, or own^k; cut off our right hands, and pluck out our right eyes; circumcise our hearts, mortify our members; crucify our flesh, with its affections and lusts; be crucified to the world; account all worldly things damage, dross, and dung, in comparison to spiritual goods: that we must so far remit and restrain our self-love, as to love all men, not excluding our greatest enemies, as ourselves: so as not only to part freely with our particular accommodations, but upon

John xii.

25.

Luke ix.

23;

xiv. 26, 33.

Matt. xvi.

24; v. 29.

Col. iii. 5.

Gal. v. 24;

vi. 14.

Rom. vi. 6.

Phil. iii. 7,

8.

^k Ἀποτάσσεσθαι πᾶσι τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ ὑπάρχουσι.—Luke xiv. 33.

occasion, in imitation of our Saviour, to lay down our lives for them; so as not only to comport with their infirmities, but to requite their extremest injuries with good-will and good turns; so as to do good to all men, to return no evil to any; *To bless them that curse us, to do good to them that hate us, to pray for them which despitefully use us, and persecute us.*

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John xv.
13.

Matt. v.

44.

These and such like dictates of the Spirit are hard and harsh sayings, absurd to our natural conceit, and abominable to our carnal humour; we cannot readily swallow them, we cannot easily digest them; in respect to them we, as mere men, are ἐχθροὶ τῇ διανοίᾳ, *enemies in our mind, or reason*; our discourse presently doth contradict and oppose them; our reason is shut up, and barred with various appetites, humours, and passions against such truths; nor can we admit them into our hearts, except God by his Spirit do set open our mind¹, and work a free passage for them into us; it is *He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, who must, as St Paul speaketh, illustrate our hearts with the knowledge of these things: an Unction from the holy One, clearing our eyes, softening our hearts, healing our distempered faculties, must, as St John informeth us, teach and persuade us this sort of truths: a hearty faith of these seemingly incredible propositions must indeed be, as St Paul calleth it, The gift of God, proceeding from that Spirit of faith, Πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως*, whereof the same Apostle speaketh; *Such faith is not, as St Basil saith^m, engendered by*

John vi.
66.

Col. i. 21.

Luke xxiv.

45.
Acts xvi.

14.
2 Cor. iv.

6.

1 John ii.
27.

Eph. ii. 8.
Phil. i. 29.
1 Cor. xii.

9.

¹ Τότε διήνοιξεν αὐτῶν τὸν νοῦν.—Luke xxiv. 45.

^m Πίστις, οὐκ ἐν γεωμετρικαῖς ἀνάγκαις, ἀλλ' ἡ ταῖς τοῦ Πνεύματος ἐνεργείαις ἐγγινομένη.—Bas. in Ps. cxv. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 371 c.]

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As for the mighty sages of the world, the

learned scribes, the subtle disputers, the deep poli-
ticians, the wise men according to the flesh, the
men of most refined judgment, and improved
reason in the world's eye, they were more ready
to deride, than to regard, to impugn, than to
admit these doctrines: to the Greeks who sought
wisdom, the preaching of them did seem foolish-
ness.

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1 Cor. i.
20, 23.

It is true, some few sparks or flashes of this
divine knowledge may possibly be driven out by
rational consideration; philosophy may yield some
twilight glimmerings thereof; common reason may
dictate a faint consent unto, may produce a cold
tendency after some of these things: but a clear
perception, and a resolute persuasion of mind, that
Full assurance of faith, πληροφορία τῆς πίστεως, and
Inflexible confession of hope, ὁμολογία τῆς ἐλπίδος
ἀκλινῆς, which the Apostle to the Hebrews speak-
eth of; that *All riches of the full assurance of*
understanding, πᾶς πλοῦτος τῆς πληροφορίας τῆς
συνέσεως, that *Abundant knowledge of the divine*
will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,
with which St Paul did pray that his Colossians
might be replenished; these so perfect illustrations
of the mind, so powerful convictions of the heart,
do argue immediate influences from the fountain
of life and wisdom, the divine Spirit. No external
instruction could infuse, no interior discourse could
excite them, could penetrate those opacities of
ignorance, and dissipate those thick mists of pre-
judice, wherein nature and custom do involve us;
could so thoroughly awaken the lethargic stupidity
of our souls; could supple the refractory stiffness
of our wills, could mollify the stony hardness of

Heb. x.
22, 23.

Col. ii. 2;

i. 9.

SERM. LXIII. our hearts, could void our natural aversation to such things, and quell that *φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς*, that *carnal mind*, the which, St Paul saith, is *enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*; could depress those
 Rom. viii. 7.
 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. *ὑψώματα*, those lofty towers of self-conceit, reared against the knowledge of God, and demolish those *ὀχυρώματα*, those bulwarks of self-will and perverse stomach opposed against the impressions of divine truth; and *captivate πᾶν νόημα*, every conceit and device of ours to the obedience of Christ and his discipline. Well therefore did St Paul pray in
 Eph. i. 17, 18. behalf of his Ephesians, that *God would bestow on them that spirit of wisdom and revelation in the acknowledgment of him, and that the eyes of their mind, τῆς διανοίας*, (or reason) might be enlightened, so as to know the hope of their calling; that is, to understand and believe the doctrines of Christianity, which upon condition of obedience did promise felicity to them.

So is the light of spiritual knowledge, together with a temper of mind, disposing to receive it, communicated to us; but further also by the same divine power and spirit are our vital heat and vigour, our active strength and courage imparted. For as mere men, we are not only blind to discern, dull to conceive, backward to undertake the necessary duties of virtue and piety; but we are also dead, heartless, and unwieldy, lame and impotent, indisposed and incapable to perform them: though we should competently apprehend our duty, and
 Matt. xxvi. 41. our spirit thence should be willing; yet our flesh, or natural power, is weak: we may, as St Paul instructeth us, in our judgment consent *That the*

Rom. vii. 12.

*Law is holy, just, and good*ⁿ; and consequently *To will may be present to us*; that is, we may be desirous, and in some measure resolved to obey it; yea, we may have some interior rational complacency therein^o; and yet not have ability to act according to these dictates and desires; for *To will is present with me*, (saith he in the person of a man endued only with natural strength, abstracting from the subsidiary virtue and operation of the divine Spirit,) *but to perform that which is good, I find not*^p; I perceive not any means or way of effecting it: knowledge therefore, and willingness to do good, doth not suffice; we need a prevalent force to stir and raise this unwieldy bulk, to overpoise our natural propensions, to subdue the reluctancies, and check the importunities of sense, to correct bad nature, and reclaim from bad custom: the natural might and policy of our single reason, being very feeble and shallow, is not fitly matched to encounter that potent confederacy of enemies, which continually with open violence doth invade and assail us; or which by clandestine wiles doth watch to circumvent and supplant us. Is it easy for us not to dread the frowns, nor to be charmed by the flatteries; to slight both the hatred and favour; to abide the persecutions, and to avoid the allurements of this world; this wicked, violent, deceitful world, which is ever ready to deter from good, and entice us to evil? Is it easy to restrain and repress those *Fleshly lusts, which*, as St Peter saith, *do war against our souls*, combating them

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I Pet. ii.
II.
James iv.
I.

ⁿ Σύμφημι τῷ νόμῳ ὅτι καλός,—Rom. vii. 16.

^o Συνήδομαι τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ κατὰ τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον.—vii. 22.

^p Τὸ δὲ κατεργάζεσθαι τὸ καλὸν οὐχ εὕρισκω.—vii. 18.

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Rom. vii.
25.

Eph. vi.
11, 12.

Num. xiii.
33.

Phil. i. 19.

Luke xxiv.
49.
Isai. lix.
19.

Eph. iii.
16.

Col. i. 11.

with their own forces, using their own faculties and members as weapons against them? Is it easy to rescue ourselves from that *Other law in our members, that warreth against the law of our understanding, and captivateth us to the law of sin?* Is it a small matter to set upon, to grapple with, to knock down that gigantic Philistine, inordinate self-love, (the root of injustice, pride, envy, malice, ambition, and avarice within us,) which naturally is so tall and stout; which, if not checked in its progress, will daily grow in stature and strength? Is it a slight business to detect, to counterplot, to decline or defeat those *μεθοδεΐας*, those *devices*, or subtle trains, and sleights of the temper; *To wrestle with principalities, with powers, with the rulers of this darksome world, with the spiritualities of wickedness* surrounding us? May we not reasonably in comparison to these mighty Anakim be (as the children of Israel anciently were) *In our own sight as grasshoppers*, quite despairing by our own strength to vanquish, to resist them?

In our spiritual conflict with such dangerous and dreadful adversaries, we do need an *ἐπιχορηγία* *τοῦ πνεύματος*, as St Paul speaketh, that is, *a large supply of the Spirit*, a collation of auxiliary forces, an habitual support derived from that invincible and infallible Spirit, which only is stronger and wiser than they; we need to be armed with that *δύναμις ἐξ ὕψους*, that *power from on high*, or heavenly might, whereby the Apostles were enabled to fight their noble battles, and to achieve their glorious conquests, subduing the rebellious world, and baffling the powers of darkness; we need *δυνάμει κραταιωθῆναι*, *to be strengthened with might*

by Christ's Spirit in the inward man, as St Paul SERM. LXIII.
 expresseth it; whereby, as he, we may πάντα ἰσχύειν, Phil. iv. 13.
 be able to do all things, or to accomplish the most
 difficult parts of our duty; without which we can John xv. 5.
 do nothing, that is, cannot discharge the most easy
 things required of us; *All our sufficiency is of God*; 2 Cor. iii. 5.
 it is he, who out of his goodness doth effect in us Phil. ii. 13.
 both to will and to perform; his Spirit taking part Rom. viii. 26.
 with our infirmities^a, and thereby giving us ad-
 vantage over all opposition and difficulty. The
 chief reason why we do not sin, or persist in a
 course of disobedience to the laws of God, is, as
 St John telleth us, *Because the divine seed abideth* 1 John iii.
in us, that root of divine life, and vital activity 9. 1 Pet. i. 23.
 implanted in us by the Holy Spirit^r; that *Divine* 2 Pet. i. 4.
nature, *θεία φύσις*, as St Peter styleth it, that prin-
 ciple and spring of spiritual motion by him in-
 serted in us; from which only seed or nature do
 sprout all heavenly graces and virtues^s.

The principal and original virtue, charity, (*The
 root, the fountain, the mother of all goodness*, as
 St Chrysostom calleth it^t) even that is shed abroad Rom. v. 5.
 in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us, as
 St Paul telleth us; and *The fruit*, saith he, *of the* Eph. v. 9.
Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth; and,
Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, benignity, goodness, Gal. v. 22.
faith, meekness, temperance, are by the same divine

^a Τὸ Πνεῦμα συναντιλαμβάνεται ταῖς ἀσθενείαις ἡμῶν.—Rom. viii. 26.

^r Vis divinæ gratiæ, potentior utique natura.—Tertull. [de Anim. cap. xxi. Opp. p. 279 D.]

^s Οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἁμαρτημάτων ἀπαλλαγῆναι ἄνευ τῆς τοῦ Πνεύματος ἐνεργείας.—Chrys.

^t Κεφάλαιον αὕτη πάντων ἐστὶ τῶν ἀγαθῶν, καὶ ρίζα, καὶ πηγὴ, καὶ μήτηρ.—Id. [de Incompreh. Dei Nat. Orat. i. Opp. Tom. vi. p. 389.]

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Apostle reckoned streams from the same source, fruits of the same rich and goodly stock: to it generally are attributed all purification of our hearts, mortification of our lusts, sanctification of our lives, and consequently salvation of our souls: Ye, saith St Paul, *are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*; and, *God hath chosen us from the beginning to salvation by sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth*; and, *Having, saith St Peter, purified our souls in obedience to the truth, by the Spirit, unto charity unfeigned*; and *If, saith St Paul again, by the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live*; thus doth our spiritual being and state, together with our life and active powers, depend upon the Holy Spirit: and not only so; but,

3 The continued subsistence and preservation, the actual use and exercise of them, all our discreet conduct, all our good practice do rely upon him: it is true of our spiritual, no less than of our natural life. *If he doth avert his face, we are troubled; if he doth subtract his influence, we die, and return unto our dust*: upon all occasions we do need his direction, aid, and comfort; for *The way of man, as the Prophet saith, is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps: It is the Lord, as the Psalmist saith, that ordereth the steps of a good man, and upholdeth him with his hand*. We have all need to pray with that good man; *Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God; thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness*.

1 Cor. vi.
11.

2 Thess. ii.
13.

1 Pet. i. 22.

Rom. viii.
13.

Ps. civ. 29.

Jer. x. 23.

Ps. xxxvii.
23;

cxliii. 8, 10.

We are vain and uncertain in our opinions, fickle and irresolute in our purposes, slow and heavy in our proceedings; apt to faint and falter, to stumble and slip in all our practice; we do need therefore this sure oracle to consult in our doubts and darkness; this faithful friend to direct and advise us in our affairs; this constant monitor to rouse and quicken us in our undertakings; this powerful guardian to support and establish us in our ways: it is, in respect to good men, this steady hand that holdeth the helm, and gently steereth their course through the blind tracks of religious practice; withdrawing them from those dangerous shelves of error and temptation, upon which they are apt to split; it is this heavenly gale, that filleth their sails with constant resolution, and fairly driveth them forward in their voyage toward eternal bliss. He softly doth whisper and insinuate good thoughts into us; doth kindle pious desires, doth cherish virtuous intentions, doth promote honest endeavours; he seasonably checketh and restraineth us from sin; he faithfully reproveth and upbraideth us for committing it; he raiseth wholesome remorse, shame, and displeasure for our unworthiness and folly; he sweetly warmeth our cold affections, inflaming our hearts with devotion toward God; he qualificeth us, and encourageth us to approach the throne of grace, breeding in us faith and humble confidence, prompting us fit matter of request, becoming our advocate and intercessor for the good success of our prayers; *Through Christ Jesus, saith St Paul, we have access Eph. ii. 18. by one Spirit unto the Father; and, The Spirit Rom. viii. helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we* ^{26.}

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should ask for as we ought; but the Spirit itself intercedeth for us.

He guardeth us, he standeth by us, he sustaineth us in all trials and temptations, affording grace sufficient to escape or to endure them; *Not suffering us to be tempted above what we are able.*

2 Cor. xii.
9.
1 Cor. x.
13.

He supporteth and comforteth us in our afflictions and distresses of all kinds, of our inward and outward estate; this David knew when in his penitential agonies he prayed, *Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me; restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit:* this those first Christians felt, who, under persecutions and all outward discouragements, were yet filled with joy, and did walk in the comfort of the Holy Ghost; whence that testimony of St Paul concerning the Thessalonians; *Ye were followers of me, and of the Lord, receiving the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:* by it the blessed saints, martyrs, and confessors being inspired, did not only with admirable patience, but incredible alacrity, undergo the extremest losses, ignominies, and tortures, which the spite of hell and rage of the world could inflict on them.

Ps. li. 11,
12.

Acts xiii.
52;
ix. 31, &c.

1 Thess. i.
6.

It is, in fine, this Holy Spirit which is the sole author and spring of all true delight, of all real content within us; of that unspeakable joy in believing, that gaiety of hope, that satisfaction in well doing; the partaking of his society, influence, and consolation, is, indeed, the most delicious repast and richest cordial of our soul; the nearest resemblance, the sweetest foretaste of paradise.

1 Pet. i. 8.
Rom. xv.
13.
Heb. iii. 6.

So many, so great; yea far more, far greater than, should the time give me leave, I could enumerate or express, are the benefits accruing to us from this most excellent gift of God, by him graciously conferred upon all good Christians; for which we should correspondently endeavour with all our hearts to praise and thank him; in all our lives to make grateful and worthy returns for it; especially by well using it to the greatest purposes, for which it was bestowed, of enabling us to serve God, of preserving us from sin, of conducting us to eternal salvation.

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Let us earnestly invite this holy guest unto us, by our prayers unto him, who hath promised to bestow his Spirit upon those which ask it, to impart this living stream to every one which thirsteth after it; let us willingly receive him into our hearts, let us treat him with all kind usage, with all humble observance. Let us not exclude him by supine neglect or rude resistance; let us not grieve him by our perverse and froward behaviour toward him; let us not tempt him by our fond presumptions or base treacheries; let us not quench his heavenly light and heat by our foul lusts and passions: but let us admit gladly his gentle illapses; let us hearken to his faithful suggestions; let us comply with his kindly motions; let us demean ourselves modestly, consistently, and officiously toward him: that we may so do, God of his infinite mercy grant unto us, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with the same Holy Spirit, for ever be all glory and praise. Amen.

Luke xi.

^{13.} John vii.

37, 38, 39.

Acts vii.

^{51.} Eph. iv.

^{30.} Isai. lxiii.

^{10.} Acts v. 9.

^{19.} 1 Thess. v.

O God, the strength of all them that put their

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trust in thee, mercifully accept our prayers; and because, through the weakness of our mortal nature, we can do no good thing without thee, grant us the help of thy grace, that in keeping of thy commandments we may please thee both in will and deed, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

SERMON LXIV.^a

AN ADEQUATE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD ATTAIN-
ABLE BY MAN.

COLOSS. III. 2.

*Set your affections on things above, not on things on
the earth.*

'TIS visible enough, that this text includes two parts; a precept and a prohibition; that en-joining us to mind (*φρονεῖν*) things above, this forbidding us to mind things below. The terms wherein they are expressed seem to contain nothing difficult or ambiguous: yet I shall endeavour somewhat to declare the import of them, not so much with intent to explain them, as to exercise in you the remembrance and consideration of what you well know about them.

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I And first concerning the act relating in common to the objects set down in both parts, I observe, that the word *φρονεῖν*, here translated, to set affection upon, doth in itself primarily, and also in common use, denote an advertency, or intent application of the mind upon any object; of the mind, that is of a man's whole rational part, comprehending in it the powers of understanding, will, affection, active endeavour; so that it may imply (either separately or conjunctly) the direction of our understanding to know, of our will to choose, of our affection to love, desire, delight in; of

[^a Printed for the first time. See Preface.]

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Matt. xvi.
23.

Phil. ii. 5.

Rom. xiv.
6.

our activity to prosecute any good proposed (good really, or in appearance good to us) : to consider and study upon it; to incline toward and embrace it; to affect and relish it; to seek and reach at it. Whence according as the quality of the object seems most probably to require, the word is (or may well be) diversely rendered; sometimes with special respect to the understanding, to think, judge, regard, esteem, (of which acception examples are most frequent and obvious); sometimes with more peculiar reference to the will and affections, as here to set our affections upon; and in that rebuke of our Saviour to St Peter, to savour: *Go behind me, Satan, thou art a scandal to me, ὅτι οὐ φρονεῖς τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ, because thou savourest not the things of God.* And that exhortation of St Paul to the Philippians: *τοῦτο γὰρ φρονείσθω ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, may be interpreted thus; Be you like affected (or so disposed in will and affection) as Christ was; so voluntarily to embrace (or however to be thoroughly content with) a mean outward condition; to submit patiently to God's will, in undergoing death, or any affliction incident to you by God's disposal, even as he did: and sometime it may be conceived, to imply especially the employing our active endeavours upon the thing mentioned; as where it is said, ὁ φρονῶν τὴν ἡμέραν, Κυρίῳ φρονεῖ: He that observes a day (or regards it so, as to perform certain supposed duties, or to abstain from certain works therein) observes it to the Lord: and so might φρονεῖν be here taken, if we should understand this precept to be altogether the same with that in the verse immediately precedent, ζητεῖτε τὰ ἄνω: Seek the*

things above, seeking chiefly seeming to imply an active pursuance of the object specified. There is further a sense of this word not unusual, and elegant enough, according to which *φρονεῖν* signifies to side with some party in preference, or opposition to some other: as *φρονεῖν τὰ Ῥωμαίων*, to take part with the Romans, in a contest or war against others; which sense is very applicable to the probable meaning of this place; which, as divers others of kin to it, seems chiefly to be intended in way of comparison, and upon supposal of some competition, or repugnance: as when our Saviour enjoins: *Treasure not up treasures upon earth; but treasure up treasures for yourselves in heaven*; and when it is said: *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice*: here; *Mind things above, not things upon the earth*, would, according to this use of the word, be thus expounded: Take part with things above, not with things on earth: when earthly things contend with heavenly for your care and affection; when the flesh doth *ἐπιθυμεῖν κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος*, is competitor with the spirit; when minding of both is inconsistent, always prefer the party of heaven before that of earth; adhere to and follow those; neglect and forsake these things: do what our Saviour commands, *ζητεῖτε πρῶτον*, *Seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof*. But (not to insist, or rely upon criticisms) I shall suppose the word here meant according to its most comprehensive signification, and that St Paul doth admonish us to employ (only or chiefly) all our mental faculties, our study, our choice, our passion, our endeavours upon superior objects, and not upon these inferior things.

Matt. vi.

19;

ix. 13.

Gal. v. 17.

Matt. vi.

33.

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I Cor. xv.
45, 47.

2 Furthermore, secondly, concerning the objects of that act, *things above*, and *things upon earth*, I shall propound to be considered; that as every man naturally consists of two parts, very different in their properties; a corruptible body formed of earth, and an immortal spirit breathed from heaven: as he is apt to perceive two kinds of satisfaction, or delight, one agreeable to bodily temper, the other suiting to rational esteem; as he is capable of subsisting in two diverse states of life, one here present upon the earth in conjunction with his frail body, for a short time; the other hereafter elsewhere, as God shall please, to all eternity; so especially a Christian man may be considered as having a double capacity, each of them grounding a distinct kind of obligations and concernments. He may first be considered as a son of the first Adam, who was made εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν, *a living soul* (inserted into an earthly tabernacle;) as bearing the image τοῦ χοικοῦ, the man taken from dust, half-brother to things here consisting of earthly matter; a member of this visible society, or commonwealth of mankind, and an inhabitant of this terrestrial world, appointed to pass a temporary life therein; a life of sense, and common reason; capable of many pleasant enjoyments, and subject to many grievous inconveniencies; to the procuring or avoiding which respectively he is furnished with sufficient powers enabling him, he is endued with vehement appetites inclining him; he hath many great advantages afforded him, there being nothing which he can need or require, that nature and providence have not competently supplied him with the means

of obtaining: whence arise both obligations and concernments to employ the powers given him, his thought and endeavour, for the preservation of this life, and the comfortable enjoyment thereof. The being apprehensive and sensible of which concernments is apt to breed unto him much matter of action; to engage him upon great business and traffic in the world, to put him upon the exercise and exertion of all his faculties, and thoughtful contrivance, and laborious execution of what seems conducive to the promotion of them: he plots and toils incessantly to settle himself in the possession of all the accommodations possible; to supply all his needs, and satisfy all his desire; to secure himself from whatever seems destructive, or distasteful to him. The scene of all which action being this great clod of earth, and the matters about which it is conversant, things present here before us, hence all matters relating to this condition of man are styled *τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς*, *things upon the earth*: which, elsewhere, for like respects are called the goods of this life; *τὰ τοῦ κόσμου*, *things of the world*; things *τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου*, *of this age or transitory state*: secular things; *τὰ βλεπόμενα καὶ πρόσκαιρα*, *things visible and temporary*: things which may be reduced to three chief kinds, the common objects of human solicitude and travail: of the *μέριμναι βιωτικαί*, those *cares of life*, with which men are commonly so much distracted and disturbed: these three kinds, I say; the necessary provisions of life, *τὰ πρὸς ζωὴν* (as St Peter calls them) things necessary or convenient to this life; the superfluous pleasures of sense; the entertainments of curious fancy: for nature doth first

Luke xvi.

^{25.}
1 Cor. vii.

^{33.}
1 John ii.

^{15.}
Gal. i. 4.

² Tim. iv.

^{10.}
2 Cor. iv.

^{18.}

2 Pet. i. 3.

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I John ii.
16.

potently stir us to provide for the preservation and sufficient contentment of our life ; to prevent death and remove grievous pain, by acquiring and keeping those things, *Queis humana sibi doleat natura negatis*^z: then doth sensual appetite importunately solicit for some gratifications to itself (accessory and beyond natural necessity) ; lastly, when nature is contented and sense glutted, then doth extravagant fancy put in and demand a share of satisfaction ; some pretty sports and diversions she requires to be entertained with. Which three sorts of worldly things perhaps St John might respect, when summing up the contents of the world (the *πάν τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ*) he finds all to amount but to these three things, *The desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the ostentation of life* ; for, the flesh (or bodily frame) requires what is absolutely needful and grateful to natural life ; the eyes and ears and other organs of sense, (which the eye may synecdochically represent) do hunt for more exquisite delicacies to please them ; the fancy would be humoured with fine and pompous shows. 'Tis in order to these, that men generally with such eagerness pursue after riches, and honour, and power ; by the means of which they hope to preserve themselves from all want, to enjoy delights easily, and abundantly to satisfy their curiosities : riches they suppose will furnish them with all things needful, pleasant, and ornamental to their state ; honour will draw, and power drive others to a subserviency or assistance of them in procuring of these, to their apprehension, very good things. Such things

^z [Hor. Sat. i. i. 75.]

therefore, and in fine all things relating to this present, earthly, transitory life are the *τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς*, *things upon the earth*: yet will I not dissemble, that sometimes (and possibly in this place according to the principal intention thereof) by earthly things and things of this world are understood not all things promiscuously, but the bad (culpable and condemnable) things of the world; the erroneous opinions, impious customs, vicious practices generally prevalent among men: concerning which sort of things, I suppose St John is to be interpreted, when he thus exhorts and denounces: *Love not the world, nor the things in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*: and St James, when he saith, *That the love (or friendship with) the world is enmity against God*. For, as a moderate content in some worldly enjoyments (relating to this life, being of an indifferent and innocent nature) is by God allowed, yea in some cases commended, and enjoined; and is apt also to produce in us a thankful sense of Divine goodness, and consequently some degrees of love unto God; so, complying with the corrupt principles, or wicked practices of the world is both sign and cause of want of love toward God, yea of aversion from him, and hatred toward him. And that St Paul, in this place, doth especially respect such things as those (bad and vicious things) is likely, for that presently after he subjoins as deduction from the preceding discourse: *Νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς*: *Mortify therefore your members upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil desire and covetousness*; implying (it seems)

1 John ii.
15.James iv.
4.

Col. iii. 5.

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these to be the things, at least the chief things upon earth which we should abstain from placing our minds upon; and by a neglect of them, die as it were unto them, and make them dead to us. But it being most safe and profitable (where the analogy of truth permits, and other evident rules consent thereto) to understand precepts in the most capacious sense, I shall assume, that by things on earth is meant, as I before spake, all things relating to the life I have described.

1 Cor. xv.
45.

2 But there is, secondly, another infinitely more considerable capacity (the proper capacity of a Christian as so) to be regarded; according to which he is said to bear (at least in design) the image of the second, heavenly and spiritual Adam, who was made *εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιούν*, *a vivific spirit*; to partake of a more vigorous and energetical life; not subject either to change or to cease. By sincere embracing and due admittance into Christianity he is in a manner dead to this, and translated into another invisible world; born again from above, and created anew, to lead there another immortal life; a life of pure understanding, and perfect goodness (begun and entered upon here, though but imperfectly, and in way of probation; to be completed and assured hereafter.) He is furnished with other faculties as it were, or habits of soul enabling him; and endued with new appetites prompting him to seek after delightful enjoyments of another kind and nature; contemplation of divine truth; complacence in goodness; and righteousness; performing works of beneficence, and charity; clearing his judgment from vain conceits, and cleansing his heart from vicious inclinations; calming his pas-

sions, and governing his actions according to rules of spiritual prudence ; satisfying his conscience in the sincere endeavour to practise all his duty ; (all the commands of God, and dictates of good reason ;) adorning his mind with all needful knowledge and virtue ; reaching after the most excellent rewards propounded and under certain conditions promised unto him. By entering upon this life he becomes member of another corporation ; is adopted into another family ; is enfranchised and enrolled among the children, the burgesses and free denizens of the *Jerusalem* Gal. iv. 26. *above, the city of the living God* ; is accounted Heb. xii. 22, 23. συμπολίτης τῶν ἁγίων, *a fellow-citizen of the saints*, Eph. ii. 19. and οἰκεῖος τοῦ Θεοῦ, *a domestic of God* ; or allied unto God ; assumed into that most high and noble family, the ἐκκλησία πρωτοτόκων, the select company of those elder-brothers, assuredly entitled to an eternal inheritance of joy and bliss. He becomes a subject (the Scripture says more, a peer, a prince, a priest, anointed to a royal priesthood, intended for a co-partner in the government and administration) of that glorious kingdom, the metropolis of which and seat of imperial residence is in heaven ; in heaven, the throne of God, the sovereign ruler of this kingdom. By this relation he is instated in many admirable privileges (and if by neglecting his interest and revolting from his engagements, he incurs no forfeiture, hath an undoubted right of reversion to more and greater), the love and favour of God ; the communion and comforts of the Holy Spirit ; free access and intercourse at the court of heaven ; the intercession of the great King, his only Son, sitting at his right

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1 Thess. ii.
12.
Col. i. 10.
Phil. i. 27.

hand: the promise, from God's infallible word, of all manner of blessings here, and a capacity of perfect everlasting felicity hereafter. From hence result suitable obligations and concernments: he is obliged to behave himself as becomes so high a quality, so worthy relations^a: to be an orderly member of that holy society; a loyal subject of that heavenly kingdom; endeavouring faithfully and earnestly the observance of its laws, the promotion of its interests, the advancement of its honour, the enlargement of its dominions, according to the particular station assigned him therein, and the means afforded him; lest for his treachery, irregularity, disobedience and unworthiness he be deprived of the rights and privileges thereof; his person banished thence, and his name expunged out of the Book of Life. 'Tis expected and required from him, that he deck himself (from the wardrobe of divine grace set open to him) with fit habiliments becoming the dignity of that honourable estate; pulling off the sordid rags of iniquity and impurity; and investing himself with that goodly apparel, those white robes of holiness and righteousness. He must study to acquire dispositions of soul agreeable to the company and conversation of that blessed place; dispositions of piety, charity, sobriety, sincerity, meekness; raising his thoughts and affections from all base and mean objects; purifying his heart from all foul and brutish lusts; repressing all rash and exorbitant passions; subduing all presumptuous and haughty conceits; discharging all fond and perverse humours;

^a Ἀξίως τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ καλοῦντος εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ βασιλείαν καὶ δόξαν.—

1 Thess. ii. 12.

forbearing all mischievous and fraudulent designs, all vicious and wicked practices; that he may be worthy (in God's merciful estimation worthy, and fitly qualified) to enter and dwell there, whither nothing common or unclean can enter; nothing vain or froward, nothing fierce or tumultuous; no wrath, or malice; no pride, envy, or detraction; no craft, guile or deceit; no strife or clamour can ever abide: whence, as St John tells us, all dogs (bark-
ing and biting, impudent and surly creatures, much more, foul swine, lascivious goats, cunning foxes, virulent serpents, ravenous wolves and cruel tigers) are excluded; only chaste and innocent doves; meek and gentle lambs are admitted: where alone unfeigned Religion and piety; unspotted sanctity and integrity; undisguised truth and simplicity; undisturbed peace and tranquillity; unbounded love and charity; incessant joy and felicity do in perfect degree, and constant durance for ever reign and flourish. He is thus obliged; and is also infinitely concerned to attend upon these things; to secure his title to, and improve his hopes of these inestimable benefits; to husband wisely the opportunities and advantages which may further him; to remove the impediments that cross him; to defeat the enemies that oppose him in the prosecution of this his great design. Now for the maintenance, and good conduct of this spiritual life, for compliance with those high obligations; for the successful management of those weighty concernments, 'tis manifest, that his most serious care, his most diligent endeavours are requisite; that he needs to employ thereupon all the faculties of his mind; to use his best

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Rev. xxii.
15.

2 Pet. i. 10.
Phil. ii. 12.

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understanding for discerning the most safe way, and fitting means of arriving to that blessed end; to consider much and often upon affairs of so vast importance; to direct his will and rouse his affections (those mighty springs and wheels of action) to a willing embracing of, and a hearty compliance in those duties; to exert the utmost power and contention of his whole spirit, upon this one only necessary business; by the success of which his main fate is determined; upon which his either extreme and endless happiness or misery will be consequent. Now because the principal matters of all these transactions and employments; the main scope the Christian man aims at; the perfection of that spiritual life he is engaged to lead; the consummation of that happy state which he aspires to; the society to which he is related, and the government he is subject unto, are things essentially resident in, or originally derived from, or ultimately tending to that superior region of light and bliss, the throne of the eternal God, and habitation of blessed spirits; hence all things however respecting that spiritual life and happy state are called *τὰ ἄνω*, *things above*; otherwise, upon like accounts, *τὰ ἐπουράνια*, *heavenly things*, (so our Saviour called the doctrine of regeneration by baptism and the Holy Spirit), *τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, *things of God*, (so our Saviour styles the events foretold by him concerning his passion and resurrection, predetermined by God in order to man's redemption and salvation), *τὰ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας*, *the things concerning the kingdom of heaven*; or *the kingdom of God*, (so the subjects of our Saviour and his Apostles' preaching, designed to the same

John iii.
12.

Matt. xvi.
23.

Acts i. 3;
xix. 8.

purposes, are commonly named), τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος SERM. LXIV.
 and τὰ πνευματικά, *things of the divine Spirit* and 1 Cor. ii. 14, &c.
spiritual things, as relating to that spiritual life: 2 Cor. iv. 18.
things invisible and *eternal*. In regard to our
 occupation about or aiming at which things, the
 author to the Hebrews calls the Christian pro-
 fession κλήσις ἐπουράνιος, *the heavenly vocation*; Heb. iii. 1.
 and St Paul, ἡ ἄνω κλήσις, *the calling above*: and Phil. iii. 14, 20.
 affirms that our πολίτευμα (our civil state, or acting
 in capacity as citizens; our political, whether re-
 lations or conversations) are in the heavens; where
 we should maintain commerce with God and
 Christ; whither we should elevate our thoughts and
 desires; where we should hope for ever to reside.
 These are the superior things here questionless
 intended, which by this apostolical precept, or ex-
 hortation we are obliged to mind; and 'tis plain
 that of them there be several ranks and kinds: it
 were infinitely hard and perhaps not so material
 exactly to digest and enumerate them; for they
 are equally extended with the heaven itself, and
 in some manner exceed it; all things in the world
 may according to some consideration be superior
 things, and come under this cognizance: the most 1 Cor. x. 31.
 indifferent and common things, as they may be
 applied to pious use, and sanctified by holy ends;
 as they may one way or other be subservient and
 instrumental to the purposes of spiritual life; as
 they may prove steps by which we climb upwards,
 may be reduced hither: yea, even the worst things,
 as the knowledge and study of them may enable
 or induce us to shun and abhor them, are com-
 prehended within the latitude of these objects,
 and appertain to the φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος, that Rom. viii. 6.

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spiritual minding here enjoined: he that minds hell itself as declaring God's justice and hatred of iniquity; as deterring us from disobedience to God's commands; as admonishing us to fly hastily from the miseries thereof; doth in a sort exalt it into the condition of the $\tauὰ \alphaὐω$, and may be truly reputed thereby to mind things above: for as it concerns the mariner to regard shelves and quicksands, that he may decline them; as the knowledge of diseases and poisons is necessary to the physician, that he may be able to prevent or remedy them; as in logic we must understand the manners of fallacy, as well as the rules of right reason; so 'tis expedient that a Christian should well know the vices to be avoided by him, and well consider the punishments due to them: and in doing thus, he doth set his mind on things above, and comply with this direction or precept apostolical. But for our somewhat more distinct and orderly proceeding, and that we may reduce our meditation within some bounds; I shall rank the principal (most properly, directly, and immediately so called) of these things into several kinds, especially to be minded by us; they are first substantial beings: Almighty God, the most blessed and glorious Trinity; the fountain of our spiritual life, and main object of our duty: the holy angels and beatified saints, the ministers of our good, and patterns of our practice. Secondly, our spiritual relations; of children, subjects, and servants; of brethren, friends, companions, and followers (respectively) to those illustrious members of that heavenly society. Thirdly, the state and condition of the future life itself, the joys and benefits of

heaven, to which we are probationers and candidates. Fourthly, the qualities or dispositions of mind to be acquired, maintained, increased by us as requisite to the possession of that happy state; including all spiritual virtues and wisdom. Fifthly, the actions to be performed by us in way of necessary duty, or means convenient in order to the promised ends; in which are to be comprehended the truths and doctrines; the precepts, and premises, and arguments directing, encouraging, persuading us to spiritual practice. To all which I suppose this apostolical injunction doth extend, according to the explication given of the act required from us, and so to be performed by us, as best suits to the nature of those things: understanding for example, that we should so mind God, as to reverence and serve him; so mind the blessed saints above, as to honour and imitate them; so mind our spiritual relations, as to behave ourselves worthily of them; so mind the state of heavenly felicity, as to desire, hope, and labour after an assurance (at least a fitness) to attain it; so mind spiritual graces, as to procure and cherish them in ourselves; so mind all spiritual duties, as effectually to perform them; so mind all means conducive to our spiritual edification, as to make the best advantage of them. Thus in general; now let us more distinctly survey particulars, and consider in what manner, and for what reasons we should so mind them.

The supreme object (first) of this duty is Almighty God, whom we should especially direct and employ all the faculties of our mind upon; our understandings, in humble contemplation of his

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admirable perfections, shining forth in the works of nature, and in the course of providence; but more clearly discovered to us in the sacred Scriptures; in studying to know, and duly to value the wonderful benefits and favours by him graciously conferred upon us; in grounding and building up our faith of those most excellent and important truths (the holy doctrine and comfortable promises) by him revealed unto us; in diligently learning and impressing upon our hearts the duties (the most just and reasonable duties, of reverence, love, gratitude, and universal obedience) required by him from us. Our will also; in bending it to a ready compliance with his good laws; in approving his faithful actions and admonitions to us; in embracing gladly and thankfully the good things he bestows or offers unto us; in choosing his favour for our greatest good, and placing our chief happiness in the fruition of him. Our affections next; by loving him, with a most cordial and sincere, a most intense and fervent charity or benevolence; by delighting in our thoughts and meditations about him, in our hopes and reliances upon him; in our addresses and services performed unto him; in the praise of his goodness, and celebration of his holy name; by earnestly desiring his favour, and above all things dreading his displeasure; and with hearty contrition grieving for the sins we have committed against him; the manifold neglects of our duty towards him, the heinous disrespect, affronts, and wrongs we have put upon him. And in correspondence with these, lastly, all the active powers of our soul; our utmost endeavours, our effectual practice should conspire in real

service of him; in doing his will, and advancing his glory. In such manner are we obliged to mind God; I need not for to prove it; for every page in Scripture teaches it, every work in nature evinces it, and almost all the world confess it. And to the doing thereof one would think there should not need much persuasion or excitement; the duty is so reasonable, the object so alluring. 'Tis a wonder that so illustrious a spectacle, so ravishing a beauty, should not irresistibly draw our eyes to gaze upon it; that so delicious a banquet should not efficaciously invite our appetite to taste it; that the highest truth should not easily attract our thoughts; nor the greatest good powerfully move our affections. Yet since there have been such of whom it hath been truly said, *God is not in all their thoughts; They do not understand and seek God; They know not the Lord*, yea, they refuse to know him; *They are ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, without God*, that is, without any consideration or regard of him, *in the world*: and because perhaps, we are all somewhat deficient in this point, and however cannot exceed in it; I shall propound some further inducements to this practice (intending to expatiate upon this most considerable part of the precept, and to spend thereon all my present meditation). For to raise ourselves therefore to the minding of God, let us consider, that God is, 1 the most proper and connatural; 2 the noblest and most worthy; 3 the most sweet and delightful; 4 the most useful and beneficial object of our mind; of our understanding and our affection.

I. I say, first, God is the most proper and connatural object of our mind; of our understanding

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Ps. xxxiv.

8;

x. 4;

xiv. 2.

Jerem. ix.

3.

1 Thess. iv.

5.

Eph. ii. 12.

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and our affection. Of our understanding, for he is most intelligible; of our affection, for he is most amiable.

I I say, first, God is most intelligible; meaning that we are capable of knowing more; more clearly, more assuredly of God, than of any other, yea, than of all other things: a proposition, which because some may doubt of, I shall more largely insist upon the declaration of. 'Tis an axiom in Aristotle, *Ἐκαστον ὡς ἔχει τοῦ εἶναι, οὕτω καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας*^b: what a thing is in itself, that it is in relation to the understanding; that which is most perfect in its own nature, may best be known; as to the corporeal eye, the greater things are in bulk, the more splendid in colour, the more regular in shape, the more steady in their place or state, the more vigorous in operation; so much the more efficaciously they move the sense: things very small, dusky, disfigured, unstable and inactive are hardly discernible; make none or very faint impulses and impressions on the sense: so is it in regard of the superior apprehensive faculties: the higher perfection in eminent properties; the greater simplicity and uniformity of nature; the more of consistency and immutability; the more of strength and energy they partake; the more perceptible they are; the more clear and genuine conceptions of themselves they are apt to produce in the understanding. How difficult (if not impossible) it is to arrive to any full, or certain knowledge of other objects, experience plainly teaches; since the most sedulous inquiries made by the choicest wits, for above two thousand years, have scarce afforded

^b Metaph. II. 1.

us any one unquestionable theorem in natural philosophy; hardly one infallible maxim of ethical prudence or policy; all things being as much exposed to doubt and dispute, as they were of old, when admiration and curiosity first prompted men to search after the cause of things; the reasons of which bad success in such attempts, are some of them obvious enough: for that the things commonly objected to our mind, by reason that the principles (or first ingredients of which they consist, and from whence chiefly their operations proceed) are in themselves so small and insensible; of their divers compositions and mixtures one with the other; their variable and flitting constitution (in birth, growth, maturity, declination and decay); their numberless differences in circumstances and extrinsical accidents befalling them; that (I say) from such like causes our knowledge of ordinary things (in degree of all creatures) is very hard and uncertain: when we know them, we know them not; for they are presently altered and vanished; and before we are aware, become other things: all things are like rivers, in perpetual flux and agitation; before we can with our greatest attention get any more than a sudden and imperfect glance of them, they are run away from us, and quickly swallowed up in a sea of unfathomable depth and obscurity; they are like marks in a speedy restless motion, at which we can take no certain aim; and 'tis very improbable that we should ever hit them^c. But Almighty God is in his nature, and in all his properties infinitely simple, consistent, and

^c This consideration made Heraclitus a sceptic, and induced him to believe nothing certainly true or fully intelligible.

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James i.
17.

Ps. cii. 11,
12, 27.

immutable: he admits no change, or shadow of alteration; he persists eternally the same in all; in his attributes; in his purposes; in his proceedings: *My days are like a shadow that declineth, and I am withered like grass; but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end*, saith the Psalmist; comparing the nature and state of God with the constitution and condition of creatures. Furthermore of other objects, we can perceive very little; only some faint colours, some superficial shapes, some dull objects; while their intrinsic nature, their chief radical properties remain enclosed and debarred from our sight in an inaccessible darkness. But of God we may apprehend (in some degree, according to our natural capacity) his most essential attributes; τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ Θεοῦ, his (magnificences) great things; his infinite goodness, wisdom, and power, (not from a few, slender, and glimmering conjectures, but) by most conspicuous arguments, and convincing testimonies innumerable: Οὐκ ἀμάρτυρον ἑαυτὸν ἀφῆκεν, *God hath not* (as St Paul saith) *left himself unattested to*, not even to natural light and reason. All creatures by their beauty and by their order testify his wisdom; by their usefulness and by their delightfulness give in evidence for his goodness; by their vast greatness and their firm stability declare his power and majesty. We cannot without shutting our eyes exclude that light of Divine glory, which fills and illustrates the world: without stopping our ears we cannot but hear that universal shout (that real harmony of the spheres) which all creatures in heaven and earth consent in utterance to his praise. Every star in heaven, every beast, every plant,

xiv. 17.

every mineral, yea every stone upon the earth; SERM. LXIV.
 some in a language very loud and express do pro-
 claim^d; others in a more still and low (yet to an
 attent ear sufficiently audible and significant) strain
 do speak those most glorious properties of God,
 and utter thankful doxologies unto him: *There is* Ps. xix. 3,
no speech nor language, where their voice is not ^{4.}
heard; their line (or rather their note, their accent,
 ὁ φθόγγος αὐτῶν (LXX.)) *is gone out through all*
the earth, and their words to the end of the world.
 So that, as St Paul speaks, τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, Rom. i.
the cognoscibility of God, is φανερὸν ἐν αὐτοῖς, is ^{19, 20.}
evidently perceptible in and by them^e; and the in-
 visible things of God (even his eternal power and
 divinity) ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασι νοούμενα
 καθορᾶται, *are perceived by observing the makes, or*
constitutions, of the creatures in the world. 'Tis
 therefore (to my apprehension) no small mistake
 to imagine, as some seem to me to do, that we can
 know little or nothing concerning God; that we
 can more easily and thoroughly know anything
 than him: since (beside the most full and plain
 revelations of Scripture, where the divine attributes
 are as with a sunbeam so clearly described by
 guidance of that very Spirit, which searcheth even 1 Cor. ii.
the depths of God, τὰ βάθη τοῦ Θεοῦ,) even pur- ^{10.}
 blind reason can discern more and greater things,
 by more clear and certain signs, concerning God,
 than it can concerning any other thing. Indeed
 God as he is the first Being, and the first Good;
 so he is πρῶτον ἀληθές, πρῶτον νοητὸν, *the first truth,*

^d Quocunque te flexeris, ibi illum videbis occurrentem tibi.
 Nihil ab illo vacat, opus suum ipse implet.—Sen. de Benef. iv. 8.

^e Πάση θνητῇ φύσει γενόμενος ἀθεώρητος ἀπ' αὐτῶν τῶν ἔργων
 θεωρεῖται.—Arist. de Mundo, cap. vi.

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and *first intelligible*; all things as they derive their beings and their specific virtues from him; so 'tis from him they partake truth and the capacity of being known. What the sun is in the visible world, most visible himself, and imparting visibility to all other things, (pardon me, if by St Austin's licence, I rob an Egyptian, and borrow such a notion from a Gentile philosopher); and as whatever we behold with our bodily eyes, 'tis not so much that thing itself which we see, as an emanation from the sun; an imperfect image, as it were, of him reflected from the specular surface of some body, in itself opaque and invisible; a mere draught of the sun; stained by the colours and fashioned by the shape of that body; so is God in the world of things intelligible: most brightly radiant to our intellectual eyes; (*He is light, and in him there is no kind of darkness*), he is himself most intelligible, and communicates intelligibility to all other things: *With thee*, saith David, *is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light*: 'tis by his light, that all things are illuminated: every creature is, as it were, *speculum Dei*: whatever we discern in them, is but some indirect glimpse of his light, some faint shadow of his power and perfection: and in this sense, *Jupiter est quodcunque vides*^f. But I will not proceed in this speculation, lest I seem too Platonical, against my will and desert; only hear, if you please, how that great contemplator discourses; (whose conceptions perhaps some too much admire. But no man hardly, I suppose, can read or mind his writings without some wonder, considering the

1 John i. 5.

Ps. xxxvi.
9.

^f [Luc. Phars. ix. 580.]

time and place of his composing them, and the little means he had of attaining to that clear notion of some great truths, and the vivid sense of goodness apparent in them.) *The sun, saith he, is the child of the Good (the supreme Good), which he begot analogous (or like) to himself; being to the eye and things seen in the visible place (or region) what himself is to the understanding, and things understood in the intelligible region. The eyes, we know, when we do not convert them upon those things, whose colours the day illustrates (but only some nocturnal glimmerings) look obscurely, and almost seem blind, and there is no pure (clear) sight: but when they are directed toward things illuminated by the sun; they see clearly, and sight is apparent: So is it with the soul; when it fixes upon that which the Truth and the Being (the supreme or absolute Truth or Being) doth shine upon, it understands and knows it; and it appears to have understanding; but when it regards things mixed with darkness, which are generated and destroyed, it merely opines and is dim-sighted; changing and tossing opinions about; so that it seems to have no understanding^s. So he, in the*

^s [Τοῦτον (τὸν ἥλιον) τοίνυν φάναι με λέγειν τὸν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἐκγονον, ὃν τὰγαθὸν ἐγέννησεν ἀνάλογον ἑαυτῷ· ὃ τι περ αὐτὸ ἐν τῷ νοητῷ τόπῳ πρὸς τε νοῦν καὶ τὰ νοούμενα, τοῦτο τοῦτον ἐν τῷ ὁρατῷ πρὸς τε ὄψιν καὶ τὰ ὁρώμενα. Ὁφθαλμοὶ—ὅταν μηκέτι ἐπ' ἐκεῖνά τις αὐτοὺς τρέπη, ὧν ἂν τὰς χροὰς τὸ ἡμερινὸν φῶς ἐπέχη, ἀλλὰ ὧν νυκτερινὰ φέγγη, ἀμβλυώττουσί τε καὶ ἐγγὺς φαίνονται τυφλῶν, ὥσπερ οὐκ ἐνούσης καθαρᾶς ὀψεως—Ὅταν δέ γε, ὧν ὁ ἥλιος καταλάμπει σαφῶς ὁρῶσι, καὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς τούτοις ὀμμασιν ὄψις ἐνούσα φαίνεται—Οὕτω τοίνυν καὶ τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ὧδε νόει· ὅταν μὲν οὐ καταλάμπει ἀλήθειά τε καὶ τὸ ὄν, εἰς τοῦτο ἀπερείσῃται, ἐνόησέ τε καὶ ἔγνω αὐτὸ καὶ νοῦν ἔχει φαίνεται· ὅταν δὲ εἰς τὸ τῷ σκότῳ κεκραμένον, τὸ γιγνόμενόν τε καὶ ἀπολλύμενον, δοξάζει τε καὶ ἀμβλυώττει ἄνω καὶ κάτω τὰς δόξας μεταβάλλον, καὶ ἔοικεν αὐτῷ νοῦν οὐκ ἔχοντι.—De Rep. vi. 508 c.]

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Sixth of his Political Dialogues. His scholar Aristotle, in his first Book *de Anima*^h, mentions a principle assumed by some ancient philosophers, that ὁμοιον ὁμοίῳ γινώσκεται; things are known by something in the soul corresponding in likeness of nature to themselves, whence they collected, that the soul did consist of so many ingredients as it could perceive objects: if there be anything of truth in that principle, and natural cognation or similitude between the faculty and its object doth anything contribute to an aptitude of knowledge, 'tis plain that God is the most proper and congruous object of our understanding: for our spirit was made according to his image; and is, as it were, a small picture, in its chief features and lineaments, resembling, representing him; so that by reflecting upon our own mental powers and operations; by being conscious of what is within us; we indirectly contemplate, and learn somewhat of God; and we may safely infer, that whatever of good and worth we find there, it is in himⁱ; though in highest degree and most perfect manner. We are avowedly his offspring, especially according to our most noble part, immediately breathed from him; (even the heathens called it ἀπόρροιαν, an efflux, or exhalation from God; ἀσπασμάτιον, a splinter broke off from the divine stock^k; *Divini spiritus partem, ac veluti scintillam quandam*^l; *A part and sparkle, as it were, of the*

^h [Cap. II. 15.]

ⁱ Dei enim imago quædam animus est, ex ipso Deo delibata ac profecta.—Cic. de Consol.

^k [Cf. Epict. Diss. Lib. I. c. 14. §§ 6, 12.]

^l Sen. de Otio Sap. [cap. xxxii. An illud verum sit, quo maxime probatur, hominem divini spiritus esse partem, ac veluti scintillas quasdam sacrorum in terras desiluisse, atque alieno loco hæsisse?]

Divine Spirit; Tertullian, more truly: *Animæ divinæ umbram, spiritus sui auram, oris sui operam*^m; SERM.
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A shadow of the divine mind; a breath (blast) of his spirit; the production of his mouth; now it is natural for children as nearly to resemble, so readily to be acquainted with their parents; by a spontaneous instinct they are apt to run into their bosoms, and fly under their wings. And we, though we have been preternaturally somewhat estranged from God (some dark clouds of ignorance and vice having been unhappily interposed between our eyes and his lightsome face) yet our nature seems not so utterly ruined and corrupted, but that we have some natural capacity, some tendency left to know and seek him. For all people willingly entertain some notion of a divine bounty, dispensing benefits to mankind; of a wise and vigilant providence ordering affairs of the world; to whose gracious assistance they have recourse, and cry to for succour in their distress; upon which kind of consideration Tertullian exclaimsⁿ: *O testimonium animæ naturaliter Christianæ*. 'Tis also further considerable, that our understanding was originally designed to know and converse about God: he made it as he did all other things, with a final reference to himself^o, according to its degree and nature, as a vessel for his use, as an instrument for his glory, *in ornamentum majestatis suæ*, as Tertullian speaks; and for what he intended it, for that it is most fit, that is its most proper operation; no composure inept or impertinent ever

^m De Resurr. Carn. [Cap. vii. Opp. p. 330 A.]

ⁿ Apol. cap. xvii. [Opp. p. 17 B.]

^o Ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα.—Rom. xi. 36.

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proceeded from his hand: and how otherwise can the mind glorify God, than by knowing him; by approving, applauding, admiring his divine perfections? If the unintelligent part of nature was produced by God for the declaration of his glorious attributes, the intelligent part must by necessary consequence (in relation thereto) be made to take notice and consider, to admire and adore them: what did the most excellent piece of art, the rarest beauty signify, were there no eye to behold, no judge to esteem it? *Nature* (saith a philosopher) *being conscious of her own beauty and artifice, hath given us an inquisitive wit; and begat us spectators to her so excellent shows; perditura fructum sui, for that otherwise she would have lost the fruit (and benefit) of herself, if she should have exhibited her so magnificent, so bright, so subtly elaborated, so fair, and many ways comely views to a mere solitude^p. Inter maxima rerum suarum natura nihil habet quo magis gloriatur, aut certe cui gloriatur^q; 'tis a shaft out of the same quiver. Nature among her greatest things hath nothing of which she can glory more, at least to which she can glory, than man; God, saith Epictetus, introduced man upon the stage of the world to be a spectator of him and his actions^r; καὶ οὐ μόνον θεατὴν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐξηγητὴν αὐτῶν; and*

^p [Curiosum nobis natura ingenium dedit: et artis sibi ac pulchritudinis suæ conscia, spectatores nos tantis rerum spectaculis genuit, perditura fructum sui, si tam magna, tam clara, tam subtiliter ducta, tam nitida, et non uno genere formosa, solitudini ostenderet.—Sen. de Otio Sap. cap. xxxii.]

^q Id. de Benef. vi. 23.

^r Ὁ Θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον θεατὴν εἰσήγαγεν αὐτοῦ τε καὶ τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ.—[Diss. i. 6. 19.]

not only a spectator, which needs some attention; SERM.
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 but an interpreter, or expositor of them, which requires a more exact knowledge. By not applying therefore our thoughts upon God, we do in a manner disappoint and frustrate God of his main design in conferring our being upon us, yea of producing the world and exposing it to our view; we neglect our proper office; and like monsters contravene the intendments of our nature; and by doing so both shew and cause our imperfection; for what is proper to, is always perfective of nature. Our mind was not made and given us to pore downwards upon dunghilly pelf; to stare idly upon gaudy trifles; to puzzle itself with petty matters; to hover upon this low narrow spot of earth, or wade in this shallow dirty pool of objects sensible; which cannot enlarge its capacity, nor satiate its appetite of knowledge, could we fully comprehend whatever is in them; nor enrich, nor adorn it sufficiently, but rather defile, damnify, debase and contract it; but it is given us and fitted to look upwards; to soar toward that *τὸ* Phil. iii. 8.
ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως, that eminency of divine knowledge; to dive into those *βάθη Θεοῦ*, those 1 Cor. ii.
10.
 abysses of God (which though we cannot sound, we may swim in); to fix itself upon those inexhaustible treasures of adorable wisdom, the sight whereof is apt to kindle love, and love certainly will beget exceeding joy and happiness; the study of which will elevate and ennoble our minds; will dilate and swell our huge capacity, will appease and content our eager desire of knowing.

I must after all this acknowledge, that God's being and his excellent attributes are indeed incom-

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- prehensible^s; and that St Chrysostom^t had reason so often to exclaim against their madness, who do πολυπραγμονεῖν τὴν οὐσίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, *are too pragmatical in their speculations about God's essence*, and do τοῖς οἰκείοις ὑποβάλλειν λογισμοῖς, *subject God and*
- I Tim. vi. 16. *divine things to their own ratiocinations*: I avow, that God inhabits φῶς ἀπρόσιτον, *a light unaccessible* to the dim and weak sight of mortal men; and that no man can see God's face and live; that God is πῦρ καταναλίσκον, *a fire that will scorch and devour* those, who by presumptuous enquiry, step too near him: I know what is written; that the light of the glory of the Lord was like consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the children of Israel; that even those spiritual eagles, the quick and strong-sighted seraphim, were obliged to veil their faces as not daring to look upon, not able to bear the fulgor of his immediate presence; to admit the flashes of glory issuing from his throne; that even the most illuminate secretaries of heaven, the Prophets and Apostles, have frequent occasion, in their astonishments to cry out, ὦ βάθος! *O the profundity of richness, and wisdom, and knowledge of God!* that even his methods of exterior providence are not by our reason thoroughly discernible; that his judgments are ἀνεξερεύνητα, *of an unfathomable depth and inscrutable*; his paths ἀνεξιχνίαστοι, *untraceable by the feet of creature*; his gifts ἀνεκδιήγητοι, *unconceivable by any thought and unexpressible by any language of ours*: all this I confess and affirm; and it doth nowise dash with or prejudice what I have intended to discourse,
- Exod. xxxiii. 20.
Deut. iv. 24.
Heb. xii. 29.
Exod. xxiv. 17.
- Isai. vi. 2.
- Rom. xi. 33.
- 2 Cor. ix. 15.

^s Vid. Job xxxvi. 26.—*Behold, God is great, and we know him not.*

^t Vid. Orat. de Incompreh. Dei Nat. Opp. Tom. v. p. 391.

but well consents therewith, and much confirms it; for divine incomprehensibility is one of those attributes, which we are capable of knowing, and obliged to consider; and it is so far from hindering, as it doth promote his intelligibility. Is the ocean less visible, because standing upon the shore, we cannot descry its utmost bounds? is the fire less sensible, because we cannot endure the utmost degrees of heat? does the inexhaustibleness of a rich mine forbid us to partake of its wealth, or the perennity of a fountain hinder us from quenching our thirst at it? may we not see the sun, because we cannot glare directly on him, nor pierce through the spacious orb of light? No: the more unlimited things are, the more correspondent they are to our faculties, especially our rational ones, which though they cannot at once grasp, do yet in successions of time and by degrees catch at infinity; no finite thing being able to satisfy their large capacities: *Quod videri communiter, quod comprehendere, quod aestimari potest, minus est et oculis quibus occupatur, et manibus quibus contaminatur, et sensibus quibus invenitur*, saith Tertullian^u: *That which can be seen, or comprehended, or esteemed is less than the eyes by which it is apprehended, than the hands by which it is soiled, than the sense by which it is found.* But the immensity of God, *Deum aestimari facit, dum aestimari non capit*, makes God to be esteemed, while itself is incapable of estimation, saith the same Father in his excellent Apologetical Oration^x; adding, *Ita eum vis magnitudinis et notum hominibus objicit et ignotum*: So his virtue (abundance) of greatness hath rendered him

^u Apol. cap. xvii. [Opp. p. 16 D.]^x Ibid. [p. 17 A.]

SERM.
LXIV.

Heb. viii.

II.

Jer. xxxi.

34.

Matt. v.

48.

Lev. xi. 44.

1 Pet. i.

15, 16.

Eph. v. 1.

*both known and unknown to men: known in degree, unknown to perfection: however his incomprehensibility is no hindrance, that we may not know him ἀπὸ μικροῦ ἕως μεγάλου, from the small one (the plain simple idiot) to the great one (the learned and profound doctor:) that we may not so (humbly and modestly) contemplate his glorious attributes, as from the consideration of them to reverence him; and love him; and endeavour to conform ourselves to his imitable perfections; in compliance with those precepts of being like in perfection to our heavenly Father, and being holy, according to him that hath called us, in all manner of conversation, and following God as dear children; which commandments we can in nowise fulfil without competent knowledge of God: *Oculi sunt in amore duces*: affection is excited by perception of that excellency, which begets and grounds it; and 'tis not imaginable, how one should transcribe a copy, without viewing and attending to it. But this point hath transported my meditation far beyond my first intendment; even so as to have justled out from my present discourse some perhaps more practical considerations, which I therefore reserve for another occasion; hoping for pardon from your candour, if my discourse shall have seemed too speculative; since what is designed, and may (though to semblance remotely) tend to God's honour, cannot be ingrateful to honest and charitable minds. I shall only add, that what hath been produced to shew God to be the most proper object of our understanding, is in some manner applicable to the like purpose of proving him the most proper object of our affection; of our love,*

our desire, our delight; as most amiable, most delectable, most beneficial in himself; as the supreme, only stable and immutable good; as our loving parent, and munificent benefactor; as he who made and gave us our affections with design, that we should chiefly employ them upon himself, in cordial adherence to him by love; delighting in the sense of his goodness; and becoming happy in the enjoyment of him. But I shall not, in prosecution of these considerations, further transgress upon your patience. Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all honour and praise for ever. Amen.

SERM.
LXIV.

A
DEFENCE
OF THE
BLESSED TRINITY.

TRINITY SUNDAY, 1663.

Φύσει μὲν ἅπας λόγος σαθρὸς καὶ εὐκίνητος, καὶ διὰ τὸν ἀντιμα-
χόμενον λόγον ἐλευθερίαν οὐκ ἔχων· ὁ δὲ περὶ Θεοῦ, τοσούτῳ μᾶλλον,
ὅσῳ μείζον τὸ ὑποκείμενον, καὶ ὁ ζῆλος πλείων, καὶ ὁ κίνδυνος χαλε-
πώτερος. καὶ γὰρ νοῆσαι χαλεπὸν, καὶ ἐρμηνεύσαι ἀμήχανον,
καὶ ἀκοῆς κεκαθαρμένης ἐπιτυχεῖν ἐργωδέστερον.—Greg. Naz. [Orat.
xxxii. Opp. Tom. i. p. 589 B.]

COLOSS. III. 2.

Set your affections on things above^a.

FOR understanding this apostolical precept, two particulars must be considered; first the act, *φρονεῖν*, (which is rendered to *set our affections*;) then the object, *τὰ ἄνω*, *things above*: these we briefly shall explain.

The word *φρονεῖν* doth primarily, and also according to common use, denote an advertency, or intent application of the mind upon any object: of the mind, that is, of a man's soul, especially of its rational part; so as to include the powers of understanding, will, affection, activity; whence it may imply direction of our understanding to know; of our will to choose and embrace; of our affection to love, desire, relish; of our activity to pursue any

^a *Τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε.*—Col. iii. 2.

good (real or apparent) which is proposed: according to which most comprehensive sense (suited to the nature of the thing) I do take the word, supposing that St Paul doth enjoin us to employ all our mental faculties in study, choice, passion, endeavour upon supernal things.

The *τὰ ἄνω*, *things above*, may be so taken, as to import all things relating to our spiritual life here, or our future state hereafter; the which do either actually subsist above in heaven, or have a final reference thither: so they may comprise, 1. The substantial beings, to whom we stand related, owe respect, perform duty. 2. The state and condition of our spiritual life here, or hereafter, as we are servants and subjects of God, citizens of heaven, candidates of immortal happiness. 3. Rules to be observed, qualities to be acquired, actions to be performed, means to be used by us in regard to the superior place and state.

Of these things the incomparably principal and supreme, the *τὸ ὑπεράνω*, is the ever most glorious and blessed Trinity; to the minding of which this day is peculiarly dedicated, and the which, indeed, is always the most excellent, most beneficial, most comfortable object of our contemplation and affection; wherefore upon it I shall now immediately fix my discourse.

The sacred Trinity may be considered, either as it is in itself wrapt up in unexplicable folds of mystery; or as it hath discovered itself operating in wonderful methods of grace towards us.

As it is in itself, it is an object too bright and dazzling for our weak eye to fasten upon, an abyss too deep for our short reason to fathom: I can only

say, that we are so bound to mind it, as to exercise our faith, and express our humility, in willingly believing, in submissively adoring those high mysteries which are revealed in the Holy Oracles concerning it, by that Spirit itself, *which searcheth the depths of God*, and by that only Son of God, who residing in his Father's bosom, hath thence brought them forth, and *expounded*, ἐξηγήσατο, *them* to us, so far as was fit for our capacity and use: and the lectures so read by the eternal *Wisdom of God*, the propositions uttered by the mouth of *Truth itself*, we are obliged with a docile ear, and a credulous heart, to entertain.

1 Cor. ii.
10.

John i. 18.

Col. ii. 3.

John xiv.
6;

x. 38;
xiv. 10;
xvii. 21.

That there is one Divine Nature or Essence, common unto three Persons incomprehensibly united, and ineffably distinguished; united in essential attributes, distinguished by peculiar idioms and relations; all equally infinite in every divine perfection, each different from other in order and manner of subsistence; that there is a mutual in-existence of one in all, and all in one; a communication without any deprivation or diminution in the communicant; an eternal generation, and an eternal procession, without precedence or succession, without proper causality or dependence; a Father imparting his own, and the Son receiving his Father's life, and a Spirit issuing from both, without any division or multiplication of essence: these are notions which may well puzzle our reason in conceiving how they agree, but should not stagger our faith in assenting that they are true; upon which we should meditate, not with hope to comprehend, but with disposition to admire, veiling our faces in the presence, and prostrating our

reason at the feet of wisdom so far transcending us.

There be those, who, because they cannot untie, dare to cut in sunder these sacred knots; who, because they cannot fully conceive, dare flatly to deny them; who, instead of confessing their own infirmity, do charge the plain doctrines and assertions of Holy Scripture with impossibility. Others seem to think they can demonstrate these mysteries by arguments grounded upon principles of natural light; and express them by similitudes derived from common experience. To repress the presumption of the former, and to restrain the curiosity of the latter, the following considerations (improved by your thoughts) may perhaps somewhat conduce.

I We may consider, that our reason is no competent or capable judge concerning propositions of this nature; *Our breast*, as Minutius speaketh, *is a narrow vessel, that will not hold much understanding*^b; it is not sufficient, nor was ever designed to sound such depths, to descry the radical principles of all being, to reach the extreme possibilities of things. Such an intellectual capacity is vouchsafed to us, as doth suit to our degree, (the lowest rank of intelligent creatures,) as becometh our station in this inferior part of the world, as may qualify us to discharge the petty businesses committed to our management, and the facile duties incumbent on us: but to know what God is^c, how he subsisteth, what he can, what he should do, by our natural perspicacity, or by any means we can

^b Nobis vero ad intellectum pectus angustum est, &c.—Min. Felix. [xviii. 8. p. 101. Ed. Holden.]

^c Τὸν μὲν οὖν ποιητὴν καὶ πατέρα τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς εὐρεῖν τε ἔργον, καὶ εὐρόντα εἰς πάντας ἀδύνατον λέγειν.—Plat. Tim. [28 c.]

use, further than he pleaseth to reveal, doth not suit to the meanness of our condition, or the narrowness of our capacity; these really are the most elevated sublimities, and the abstrusest subtilties that are, or can be, in the nature of things: he that can penetrate them, may erect his tribunal any where in the world, and pretend justly that nothing in heaven or earth is exempted from his judgment. But in truth, how unfit our reason is to exercise such universal jurisdiction, we may discern by comparing it to our sense; it is obvious, that many beasts do (by advantage of a finer sense) see, hear, smell things imperceptible to us: and were it not very unreasonable to conclude, that such things do not exist, or are in themselves altogether insensible, because they do not at all appear to us? Is it not evident, that we ought to impute their imperceptibility (respecting us) to the defect of our sense, to its dulness and grossness, in regard to the subtilty of those objects? Even so may propositions in themselves, and in regard to the capacity of higher understandings, (for there are gradual differences in understanding, as well as in sense,) be true and very intelligible, which to our inferior reason seem unintelligible, or repugnant to the prenotions with which our soul is imbued; and our not discerning those truths may argue the blindness and weakness of our understanding, not any fault or inconsistency in the things themselves; nor should it cause us anywise to distrust them, if they come recommended to our belief by competent authority.

To such purposes indeed the Holy Scripture frequently doth vilify our reason and knowledge:

Jer. x. 14. *Every man, saith Jeremiah, is brutish in knowledge*

The Lord, saith the Psalmist, *knoweth the thoughts* ^{Ps. xciv.}
of man, (of wise men, as St Paul quoteth it,) *that* ^{I I.}
they are vanity. *Vain man*, saith he in Job, *would* ^{I Cor. iii.}
be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt;
that is, however we affect to seem wise, yet to be
dull as an ass, to be wild as a colt, is natural to us.
My thoughts, saith God in the Prophet, *are not* ^{Isai. lv. 8,}
your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways: for as ^{9.}
the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my
ways than your ways, and my thoughts than your
thoughts. God's wisdom is as the heavens, the
highest and top of all wisdom; man's as the earth,
beneath which there is no degree, but that of hell
and darkness: we therefore in this respect are unfit
to determine concerning things so exceedingly
sublime and subtle.

2 We may consider, that not only the imper-
fection of our reason itself, but the manner of using
it, doth incapacitate us to judge about these mat-
ters. Had we competent skill to sail in this deep
ocean, yet do we want a gale to drive us, and a
compass to steer our course by therein; we have
not any firm grounds to build our judgment on,
or certain rules to square it by. We cannot effec-
tually discourse or determine upon any subject,
without having principles homogeneous and per-
tinent thereto, (that are ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ συγγενείᾳ^d, cog-
nate and congruous to the subject-matter, as the
philosopher speaketh,) upon which to found our
argumentation. Now all the principles we can
have are either originally innate to our minds, or
afterward immediately infused by God, or by ex-
ternal instruction from him disclosed to us; or

^d Anal. I. 7. [?]

acquired by our experience, and observation of things incurring our sense; or framed by our reason, comparing those means; of which the three former sorts are most arbitrarily communicated, and both for number and kind depend upon the free pleasure of him, who distributeth them according to a measure^e, suitable to each man's occasions, estimated by himself. How many those are, and how far they may qualify us to judge or discourse about those transcendent matters, is hard to define; but most certainly they never can clash with one another; no light in any manner imparted by God can obscure the doctrine declared by him, no doctrine can thwart principles instilled by him. The latter sorts appertain only to material and sensible objects; which therefore can only enable us to deduce, or to examine conclusions relating to them; and being applied to things of another kind, are abused, so as to become apt to produce great mistakes: As, for instance, most ancient philosophers observing, that the changes and vicissitudes in nature were generally by the same matters undergoing several alterations, or putting on different shapes; and that bodies once being in rest did usually consist in that state, until by impulse of other bodies they were put into motion; did thence frame such axioms, or principles of discourse, *Ex nihilo nihil fit*; and *Quicquid movetur, ab alio movetur*: which propositions, supposing them true in relation to the present conditions and powers of sensible things, yet were it unlawful to stretch them unto beings of another kind and nature, (to beings immaterial and insensible,) or to infer thence

^e Ἐκάστῳ ὡς ὁ Θεὸς ἐμέρισε μέτρον.—Rom. xii. 3.

generally, that in the utmost possibility of things there is not any creative or any self-motive power: even as from the like premises it would be vain to conclude, that there be no other beings subsistent beside those which strike our senses, or discover themselves by sensible effects. In like manner, it cannot be reasonable, out of principles drawn from ordinary experience about these most low and imperfect things, to collect, that there can be no other kind of unions, of distinctions, of generations, of processions, than such as our own gross sense doth represent to us: reason itself more forcibly doth oblige us to think that to sublimer beings there do pertain modes of existence and action, unions and distinctions, influences and emanations of a more high and perfect kind, such as our coarse apprehension cannot adequate, nor our rude language express^f; which we, perhaps, have no faculty subtle enough to conceive distinctly, nor can attain any congruous principles, from which to discourse solidly about them^g. To judge of these things, if we will not, against the philosopher's rule, μεταβαίνειν εἰς ἄλλο γένος, shift kinds, or use improper and impertinent arguments, we must

^f Id quod Deus est, secundum id quod est, nec humano sermone edici, nec humanis auribus percipi, nec humanis sensibus colligi potest.—Novat. de Trin. cap. vii. [App. ad Tertull. Opp. (Ed. Paris. 1664). p. 710 c.]

^g Ὀνομάσαμεν γὰρ, ὡς ἡμῖν ἐφικτόν, ἐκ τῶν ἡμετέρων τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ.—Greg. Naz. Orat. xxxi. de Sp. S. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 570 A.]

^g Tamen cum quæritur quid tres, magna prorsus inopia humanum laborat eloquium. Dictum est tamen tres Personæ, non ut illud diceretur, sed ne taceretur.—Aug. de Trin. v. 9. [Opp. Tom. viii. col. 838 D.]

Κύριον ὄνομα τῶν νοητῶν τε καὶ ἀσωμάτων, οὐδέν.—Greg. Naz. [Ep. ccxliii. ad Evag. Opp. Tom. ii. p. 198 A.]

1 Cor. ii.
13; πνευματικοῖς πνευματικὰ συγκρίνειν, *compare spiritual things with spiritual*; so as to draw conclusions about spirituals only from principles revealed by God's Spirit, the sole master of spiritual science; so also as to express them, *Not ἐν διδακτοῖς ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας λόγοις, in terms devised by human wisdom*, but in such as the Holy Spirit hath suggested; for ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος, a man endowed merely with common sense (or natural reason) cannot δέχεσθαι, *apprehend*, or perceive those things of God, which only the Spirit of God doth know. To improve and press which consideration further,

ver. 14;
ver. 11.

3 We may consider the weakness and shortness of our reason, even about things most familiar and easy to us; the little or nothing we by our utmost diligence can attain to know, concerning their intrinsic essences, their properties, their causes and manners of production. What do we more commonly hear, than earnest complaints from the most industrious searchers of natural knowledge concerning the great obscurity of nature, the difficulty of finding truth, the blindness of our mind, and impotency of our reason? And should they be silent, yet experience plainly would speak how difficult, if not impossible, it is to arrive unto any clear and sure knowledge of these common objects; seeing the most sedulous inquiries, undertaken by the choicest wits for above two thousand years, have scarce perhaps exhibited one unquestionable theorem in Natural Philosophy, one unexceptionable maxim of ethical prudence or policy; all things being still exposed to doubt and dispute, as they were of old, when first admiration and curiosity did prompt men to hunt after the causes

of things: the most however that, after all our care and toil, we can perceive, doth not exceed some faint colours, some superficial figures, some gross effects of things, while their radical properties and their immediate causes remain enveloped and debarred from our sight in unaccessible darkness. Shall we then, who cannot pierce into the nature of a pebble, that cannot apprehend how a mushroom doth grow, that are baffled in our philosophy about a gnat, or a worm, debate and decide^h (beyond what is taught us from above) concerning the precise manner of divine essence, subsistence, or generation? *I do*, saith St Chrysostom, *eat meats; but how they are divided into phlegm, into blood, into juice, into choler, I am ignorant; these things, which every day we see and taste, we do not know; and are we curious about the essence of Godⁱ?* We are (as Aristotle^k himself, no dunce, no idiot, doth confess) but *owl-eyed*, πρὸς τὰ τῇ φύσει φανερώτατα πάντων, *in regard to things naturally most evident, and palpable; and can we be such Lynceus's^l, as to see through the furthest recesses of infinity?* *Hardly*, saith the Wisdom of Solomon, Wis. ix. 16. *do we guess aright of things upon the earth, and with labour do we find the things that are before*

^h Κενούσθω σοι τὸ φιλότιμον ἐν τοῖς ἀκινδύνοις.—Greg. Naz. [Or. xxxii. Opp. Tom. i. p. 598 D.]

ⁱ Βρώματα ἐσθίω, τὸ δὲ πῶς μερίζονται εἰς φλέγμα, εἰς αἷμα, εἰς χυμὸν, εἰς χολήν, ἄγνοῶ. ταῦτα ἅπερ βλέπομεν καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν ἐσθίοντες ἀγνοοῦμεν, καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ πολυπραγμονοῦμεν;—Chrys. [De Incompreh. Dei Nat. Orat. i. Opp. Tom. vi. p. 391.]

^k Arist. Met. ii. 1. [Ὡσπερ γὰρ καὶ τὰ τῶν νυκτερίδων ὄμματα πρὸς τὸ φέγγος ἔχει τὸ μεθ' ἡμέραν, οὕτω καὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας ψυχῆς ὁ νοῦς πρὸς τὰ τῇ φύσει φανερώτατα πάντων.]

^l [Non possis oculo quantum contendere Lynceus.—Hor. Ep. i. 1. 28.]

us; but the things that are in heaven, who hath searched out? Yea, and the genuine Solomon himself, *I said, I will be wise; but it was far from me: that which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?* What is more remote, what more profound, than God's nature? who then can find it out? Sooner with our hands may we touch the extreme surface of the skies, sooner with our eyes may we pierce to the centre of the earth: so it is expressly told to us in Job; *Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?*

Eccles. vii.
23, 24.

Job xi. 7,
8.

4 It may be considered, that we daily see and observe things, which, did not manifest experience convince us of their being, we should be apt to disbelieve their possibility; sense no less than faith doth present us with objects, to bare reason improbable and unconceivable; so that should we attend to the scruples injected thereby, we should hardly take things for possible which we behold existent; we should distrust the greatest evidence of sense, and by our logic put out our eyes. Who would believe, that, did he not every day see it; who can conceive how, although he seeth it, from a little dry, ill-favoured, insipid seed thrown into the earth, there shortly would rise so goodly a plant, endued with so exact figure, so fragrant smell, so delicate taste, so lively colour; by what engines it attracteth, by what discretion it culleth out, by what hands it mouldeth its proper aliment; by what artifice it doth elaborate the same so curiously, and incorporate it with itself? What virtue could we imagine in nature able to digest an earthly

juice into the pellucid clearness of crystal, into the invincible firmness of a diamond? Who would not be an infidel, did not his sight assure him of the miracles achieved by that blind plastic force, which without eye or hand doth frame such varieties of exquisite workmanship, inimitable, and far surpassing the skill of the greatest artist? That a little star, from so vast a distance, in a moment, should make impression on our eyes, replenishing with its light or image so spacious a region all about it, were we blind we should hardly believe, we scarce could fancy: how, without knowing the organs of speech, or the manner of applying them, without any care or pain employed by us, we so conform our voice, as to express what word, what accent we please; how we do this, or that we can do it, as it will confound our thought to imagine, so it would stagger our faith to believe, did not our conscience persuade us, that we can and do speak. It is upon occasion very commonly said, I should never have believed it, had I not seen it; and that men speak so in earnest, many such instances declare. Now if we can give credit to our sense against the suffrage or scruple of our reason, in things not so discosted from our capacity of knowledge, shall we not much more yield our belief unto God's express word in things so infinitely distant from it? If common experience can subdue our judgments, and compel us to a belief of things incredible, shall our reason demur at submitting to divine authority? If the dictate of our conscience doth convince us, shall not we much more surrender to the testimony of God, *Who is greater than our conscience, and knoweth* ^{1 John iii.} 20.

all things? If we do believe, because we seem to know by seeing ourselves; we should rather believe, because we surely know by hearing from God: for sense may deceive us, and often needeth correction from reason; God cannot deceive, and reason often is by him corrected: which leadeth me to a further consideration, that,

5 The propositions clearly delivered unto us by God himself, are upon many accounts more unquestionably true, more credible than the experiments of any sense, or principles of any science: whence if there happen to arise any seeming contest between these, a precedence is due to the former in derogation to the latter; it is fit that we rather give our eyes and our ears, our fancies and our reasons the lie, than anywise, by diffidence to his word, put an affront on God, (for to disbelieve him is, as St John telleth us, to give him the lie;) τὸ μωρὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, *The folly of God* (as St Paul speaketh; that is, the points of faith declared by God, which seem most irrational and cross to the decrees of human wisdom) *is σοφώτερον τῶν ἀνθρώπων, wiser than men*; that is, more assuredly consonant to real truth, than our most undoubted theorems of science, and most current maxims of policy. God is the *Father of all lights*, both of that which immediately shineth from heaven, and of that which glimmereth here below; he is the fountain of all truth, whether natural or supernatural: but his light and his truth he conveyeth into us by manners different; some light streameth directly from him, other cometh obliquely, being refracted through divers mediums, or reflected from several objects upon us; the first sort must needs be more bright, and more pure,

1 John v.
10.
1 Cor. i.
25.

James i.
17.

should be more powerful and efficacious upon our minds: the latter is often blended with material tinctures, is weakened by the interruptions it meeteth with, loseth of its purity and its force by the many conduits it passeth through, by the many shades it mixeth with. Observations of sense do often prove fallacious; and their not ever doing so dependeth upon divers conditions, a right temper of the organ, a fit disposition of the medium, a just distance of the object; so that conclusions derived from them cannot be so absolutely certain, nor consequently the principles grounded on them. But divine revelation is not obnoxious to such conditions: as the doctrines revealed are in themselves simply true, according to the highest pitch of necessity, because supreme wisdom doth conceive them, and truth itself doth vent them; so the manner of declaring them must be competent, because God himself doth choose and use it; there plainly needeth no more, than yielding an attentive ear, and skill in the language wherein they are expressed, to secure us from error and uncertainty about them; so that well might St Austin say, that, *In other things our conjecture is exercised; but faith alone doth assure our mind^m.*

There have been those, you know, who have not only advanced doubts concerning propositions attested to by clearest sense, and inferred by strongest discourse; but have by their argute cavillations bid fair to shake the foundations of all human science: but I never heard of any, who believed a God to be, that did contest the infallible truth of

^m Ad cætera exercemur per fortasse; at cum de rebus fidei agitur, ibi est certe sine forte.—Aug.

his oracles : Socrates, we may be sure, (his excellent scholar assuring us) who was so incredulous as to disclaim all pretence to wisdom or science, being author of the famous saying, *Hoc tantum scio* ; yet greatly did rely upon divine significations and testimonies, so deemed by him, and such as he could come at; alleging, that he, who followeth the conduct of his own reason, instead of God's direction, chooseth a blind and ignorant guide, before one that best seeth and knoweth the way: *He*, saith the historian, *despised all human conceits in respect of God's advice*ⁿ.

Ps. xciv.
9, 10.

He that formeth the eye, saith the Psalmist, *shall not he see? He that planteth the ear, shall not he hear? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?* He that endued us with all our knowing faculties, and presideth over us in the management of them, shall not he supereminently know all that we can? Must not they in reason continue subordinate to his direction? Should they not always discern and judge under correction by him, with an appeal and submission reserved to his better judgment?

I might adjoin, that the object and the end (as well as the author and the manner) of divine revelation doth argue it to surpass all reason, and all sense, in certainty and credibility; for sense and reason converse wholly, or chiefly, about objects material and mutable; revelation about immaterial and immutable things: they direct us in affairs concerning this transitory life; this leadeth us toward eternal felicity. To mistake about those objects,

ⁿ Αὐτὸς δὲ πάντα τὰνθρώπινα ὑπερέώρα πρὸς τὴν παρὰ τῶν Θεῶν συμβουλίαν.—[Xen. Mem. I. 3, 4.]

to miscarry in those affairs, is in itself of little, in comparison of no importance: but to judge rightly about these things, to tread safely in these paths, is of infinitely vast concernment; a smaller competency therefore of light and certainty might well suffice to the purposes of reason and sense; but to faith the greatest degree of assurance is worthily due, and seemeth requisite. But further,

6 Not only the consideration of this mystery, but of all the divine attributes, will in like manner extort from our feeble reason the question of Nicodemus, *How can these things be?* They will all of John iii. 9. them equally puzzle our shallow imagination, and baffle our slender understanding: for who can imagine, or understand, how God's immensity doth consist with his perfect simplicity; or that without any parts he doth coexist to all possible extension of matter; being all here, and wholly there, and immensely every where? Who can apprehend his indivisible eternity, or how all successions of time are ever present to him, and subject to his view; so that he is not older now than he was when the world began, nor younger than he will be after innumerable ages are past; so that he foreseeth the most contingent events, depending upon causes in their nature arbitrary and indeterminate? Who can fancy, how out of mere nothing, or out of extreme confusion and indisposedness, the world could be created, and framed into so goodly order, by a mere act of will, or by the bare speaking of a word? How without any distraction of thought he governeth affairs, attending to the infinite varieties of thoughts, words, and actions occurring here; and, *Ita curans universos tanquam singulos, ita*

James i.
17.

singulos tanquam solos, as St Austin speaketh^o? How he is truly said to resolve and to reverse, to love and hate, to be pleased and grieved, all without any real change, or shadow of alteration? How he suffereth many things to happen, which extremely displease him, and which he can easily hinder; and doth not effect many things which are much desired by him, and very feasible to his power? Why to equal men he distributeth his gifts so unequally; affording to divers abundant means of becoming happy, leaving others destitute of them? What wit of man can reconcile his infinite benignity with his most severe decrees; or compose the seeming differences between his mercy and his justice? Many such perfections and dispensations of God we must stedfastly believe, because they are plainly taught in Scripture; to distrust them being to renounce Christianity; to deny them being to rase up the very foundations of our Religion: yet he that shall with his utmost attention of mind endeavour to conceive how they can be, or how they consist together, according to our ordinary notions of things, and the vulgar meaning of words, applied by us to these inferior matters, shall find himself gravelled with innumerable semblances of contradiction, plunged in depths inscrutable, involved in labyrinths inextricable.

1 Cor. i. 23.

What in practice the cross of Christ was, *A scandal to Jews*, (men dull, but obstinate, and invincibly possessed by vain prejudices,) and *folly to Greeks*, (men of wit and subtilty, but overween-

^o [O tu bone omnipotens, qui sic curas unumquemque nostrum tanquam solum cures, et sic omnes tanquam singulos.—Confess. III. 11. Opp. Tom. I. col. 95 F.]

ingly conceited of them,) that in speculation may a great part of divine truths be, apt to stumble froward and arrogant men^p; but as there, so here, *Blessed are they who are not scandalized*; whom no fond scruple or haughty conceit can pervert from readily embracing all necessary verities; such are those we pointed at, which if without extreme folly and impiety we cannot reject, or be diffident of, although surmounting our conceit, and dazzling our reason; then upon the same account, with like facility, we must submit our faith to the doctrines concerning the blessed Trinity, standing upon the same authority.

7 Lastly we may consider and meditate upon the total incomprehensibility of God in all things belonging to him^q; in his nature, his attributes, his decrees, his works and ways; which all are full of depth, mystery, and wonder. *God inhabiteth* *φῶς ἀπρόσιτον*, a light inaccessible to the dim and weak sight of mortal eyes; *Which no man hath seen, nor can see*: No man, as he told his servant Moses, *can see his face* (the very exterior appearance of him) *and live*: *He is a consuming fire*, that will scorch and devour such as by rash inquiries approach too near him^r; *The sight, it is said, of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire in the*

Matt. xi.
6.

1 Tim. vi.
16.

Exod.
xxxiii. 20,
23.

Deut. iv.
24.

Exod.
xxiv. 17.

^p Πλέον γὰρ ἐστὶ τοῦ περὶ Μουσικῶν ἀμούσους, καὶ πολεμικῶν ἀστρατεύτους διαλέγεσθαι, τὸ τὰ θεῖα καὶ δαιμόνια πράγματα διασκοπεῖν, ἀνθρώπους ὄντας, οἷον ἀτέχνους τεχνιτῶν διάνοιαν ἀπὸ δόξης καὶ διανοίας κατὰ τὸ εἶκὸν μετιόντας.—Plut. de sera Num. Vind. [Opp. Tom. viii. p. 173. Ed. Reisk.]

^q Εἰ γὰρ αἱ οἰκονομίαι ἀκατάληπτοι, πολλῷ μᾶλλον αὐτός.—Chrys. [De Incompreh. Dei Nat. Orat. i. Opp. Tom. vi. p. 393.]

^r Scrutator majestatis opprimetur a gloria.—[Verbatim. Sic qui scrutator est majestatis, opprimetur a gloria.—Prov. xxv. 27. Vulgate.]

sight of the children of Israel. Even those spiritual eagles, the quick and strong-sighted seraphim, are obliged to cover their faces, as not daring to look upon, nor able to sustain the fulgor of his immediate presence, the flashes of glory and majesty issuing from his throne: and the most illuminate secretaries of heaven, unto whom secrets were disclosed, into which angels themselves were ambitious to pry, were sometimes nonplussed in contemplation of God's attributes and actions; being in their astonishment forced to cry out, ὦ βάθος, *O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!* Even his methods of exterior providence are inscrutably mysterious; *His judgments are ἀνεξερεύνητα*, like inexhaustible mines, to the bottom whereof we cannot anywise dig by our inquiry; *His paths are ἀνεξιχνίαστοι*, so obscure as not to be traced by any footsteps of our discourse; *His gifts are ἀνεκδιήγητοι*, not to be interpreted, or expressed by our language. And if all concerning God be thus incomprehensible, why should any thing seem incredible? Why out of so many unconceivable mysteries do we choose some, reprobate others? Wherefore do we stretch our judgment beyond its limits to things so infinitely exceeding it^s? Why do we suffer our reason to be pragmatistical, unjustly invading the office not belonging thereto; *Intruding into things which it hath not seen, nor can comprehend; those Secret things*

Isai. vi. 2.
1 Pet. i. 12.
Rom. xi. 33.
2 Cor. ix. 15.
Col. ii. 18.
Deut. xxix. 29.

^s Τί πρὸς οὐρανὸν ἀνίπτασαι περὶ ὧν; τί καὶ σὺ μετρέεις τῇ χειρὶ τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν σπιθάμῃ, καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν δρακί;—Greg. Naz. [Or. xxxii. Opp. Tom. i. p. 597 B.]

Δόξη ἐστὶν ἀχώρητος, μεγέθει ἀκατάληπτος, ὕψει ἀπερινόητος, ἰσχύϊ ἀσύγκριτος, σοφίᾳ ἀσυμβίβαστος, ἀγαθωσύνῃ ἀμίμητος, καλοποιῶν ἀνεκδιήγητος.—Theoph. ad Autol. [Lib. i. 3. p. 361 E.]

which belong to the Lord our God, and the comprehension whereof he hath reserved unto himself?

These considerations may suffice in some manner to shew, that St Chrysostom had reason to exclaim so much against the madness, as he styleth it^t, of those who do πολυπραγμανεῖν τὴν οὐσίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, *are busily curious in speculation about the essence of God*; daring τοῖς οἰκείοις ὑποβάλλειν λογισμοῖς, *to subject divine mysteries to their own ratiocinations*^u: that St Basil's advice was wholesome, μὴ περιεργάζεσθαι τὰ σιωπώμενα, *Not to be meddlesome about things, about which Holy Scripture is silent*: that another ancient writer did say no less truly than prettily, that in these matters, *Curiositas reum efficit, non peritum*^x; we may easilier incur blame than attain skill by nice inquiry into them: that many of the Fathers do with great wisdom dislike and dissuade the searching τὸ πῶς^y; the manner of things being true, or possible, as a suspicious mark, or a dangerous motive of infidelity: that St Paul's rules, φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν, *To be* ^{Rom. xii. 3.} *wise so as withal to be sober, and modest*; and μὴ ὑπὲρ ὃ γέγραπται, φρονεῖν, *Not to conceit any thing* ^{I Cor. iv. 6.} *without warrant of Scripture*, are in this case most

^t Μανίαν γὰρ ἔγωγε εἶναι ἐσχάτην φημὶ φιλονεικεῖν εἰδέναι τί τὴν οὐσίαν ἐστὶν ὁ Θεός.—Chrys. [De Incompreh. Dei Nat. Orat. i. Opp. Tom. vi. p. 391.]

^u [Id. Ibid.]

Cogitemus si valemus; si non valemus credamus.—Aug. Serm. v. de Temp. [Serm. CCCLXIX. Opp. Tom. v. col. 1457 B.]

Τίς ἢ τοιαύτη ὑμῶν φιλονεικία τῶν ἐφευρέσεων, ὥστε ἀνθρωπίνῃ φρονήσει, ὑπὲρ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην νόησιν ὀρίζεσθαι;—Athan. [con. Apoll. Lib. i. Opp. Tom. i. p. 932 E.]

^x Zeno Veronens. [Lib. ii. Tract. v. p. 146.]

^y Σαφὴς ἔλεγχος ἀπιστίας τὸ πῶς περὶ (ἐπὶ) Θεοῦ λέγειν.—Expos. Fid. apud Just. M. [Opp. (App.) p. 461 E.]

especially to be heeded: that, according to St Peter's admonition, we should *As new-born babes* (unprepossessed with any notions or fancies of our own) *long for, ἐπιποθεῖν, and greedily suck in the sincere milk of the word*; not diluting it with baser liquors of human device: that where God doth interpose his definitive sentence, our reason hath nothing to do but to attend and submit; no right to vote, no licence to debate the matter; its duty is to listen and approve whatever God speaketh, to read and subscribe to whatever he writeth; at least in any case it should be mute, or ready to follow

1 Pet. ii. 2. Job, saying, *Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth.*

Job xl. 4. In fine, the testimony of God, with a sufficient clearness represented to the capacity of an honest and docile mind, (void of all partial respects, and clear from all sorts of prejudice; loving truth, and forward to entertain it; abhorring to wrest or wrack things, to use any fraud or violence upon any principle, or ground of truth;) the testimony of God, I say, so revealed, whatever exception our shallow reason can thrust in, should absolutely convince our judgments, and constrain our faith. If the Holy Scripture teacheth us plainly, and frequently doth inculcate upon us, (that which also the uniform course of nature and the peaceable government of the world doth also speak,) that there is but one true God; if it, as manifestly, doth ascribe, to the three Persons of the blessed Trinity the same august names, the same peculiar characters, the same divine attributes, (essential to the Deity,) the same superlatively admirable operations of creation and providence; if it also doth prescribe

to them the same supreme honours, services, praises, and acknowledgments to be paid unto them all; this may be abundantly enough to satisfy our minds, to stop our mouths, to smother all doubt and dispute about this high and holy mystery. It was exceeding goodness in God, that he would condescend so far to instruct us, to disclose so noble a truth unto us, to enrich our minds with that τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως, that most excellent Phil. iii. 8. knowledge of himself; and it would be no small ingratitude and unworthiness in us anywise to suspect his word, or pervert his meaning; anywise to subject his venerable Oracles to our rude canvasses and cavils. In fine, the proper employment of our mind about these mysteries, is not to search and speculate about them, to discourse flippantly and boldly about them; but with a pious credulity to embrace them, with all humble respect to adore them.

I have thus endeavoured in some measure to defend the outworks of the orthodox doctrine concerning the blessed Trinity: it was beside my intent to insist so long thereon; but the matter did ἐφέλκεσθαι, was so attractive, that I could not wave shewing my respect thereto.

I proceed now to that which I principally designed, the proposing briefly some practical considerations, apt to excite us to the exercising our understanding and affections upon those wonderful dispensations of grace and mercy, vouchsafed to us by the holy Trinity, either conjunctly, or (as they κατ' οἰκονομίαν are expressed) separately.

We first should carefully study and duly be affected with that gracious consent, and, as it were,

confederacy of the glorious Three in designing and prosecuting our good; their unanimous agreement in uttering those three mighty words of favour to mankind, *Faciamus, Redimamus, Salvemus*; Let us make man out of nothing, Let us recover him from sin and perdition, Let us crown him with joy and salvation; we should with grateful resentments observe them conspiring to employ their wisdom in contriving fit means and methods to exert their power in effectual accomplishment of what was requisite to the promoting of our welfare, the rescue of us from all misery, the advancing us to the highest degree of dignity, and instating us in the most perfect condition of happiness, of which our nature is capable; in prosecution of that gracious design, which their joint goodness had projected for us. More distinctly,

I We should set our mind on God the Father, before the foundation of the world from all eternity, pleasing to forecast with himself the creation of us, and communication of his own image to us; endowing us with most excellent faculties of body and soul; subjecting the visible world to our use and governance; placing us in a state of great accommodation and delight; permitting us to fall, that he might raise us to a higher and better condition; resolving to send his own dear Son from his bosom, to procure and purchase the redemption of mankind; preparing and disposing the world for the reception of so great a mercy, by a general testification of his patience and beneficence, (*Giving showers and fruitful seasons, and filling the hearts of men with food and gladness,*) but more especially

by prophetic promises, predictions, and prefigurations: also suffering the generality of mankind so to proceed in its ways, as might render it sensible of its error and unhappiness, of the need and benefit of a deliverance; then *In the fulness of time*, when *The creature did earnestly groan, and long for its recovery from vanity and slavery*, actually sending his only Son, and clothing him with human flesh, that conversing with us, he might discover to us his gracious intentions toward us, might confirm the truth thereof by miraculous works, might instruct us by his heavenly doctrine and holy life in our duty, and the terms of our salvation, then freely delivering him over unto death, and accepting his passion as a sacrifice expiating our sins, and meriting his favour toward us; then raising him as the first fruits from the dead, setting him at his right hand, investing him with authority to govern and save those who sincerely would believe in him, and faithfully obey him; also sending and bestowing his Holy Spirit to dwell in them, to conduct, confirm, and comfort them in the ways of truth and righteousness. These, with manifold other intercurrent passages of gracious providence ascribed to God the Father, we should seriously mind, and so resent, as to be ravished with admiration of his mercy, to be inflamed with love of his goodness, to be possessed with gratitude toward him, to become thoroughly devoted to his service.

2 We should likewise mind the blessed Son of God concurring with his Father in all his purposes of love and mercy toward us, in making all things, and sustaining them by the word of his power; but

Gal. iv. 4.

Rom. viii.

22.

1 Cor. xv.

20.

John i. 3.

Heb. i. 3.

especially in his (toward the freeing us from the desperate miseries, corruptions, and slaveries, into which we were plunged) assuming human nature, leading therein a troublesome and toilsome life, for our benefit and instruction; undergoing a bitter and shameful death, for the atonement of our sins, and reconciliation of us to divine favour; purchasing great and precious promises, procuring high and glorious privileges for us; ascending into heaven to prepare us mansions of bliss; interceding for us with God, and pouring from above manifold blessings upon us; the astonishing miracles of goodness, of wisdom, of condescension and patience, displayed in the management of which undertakings for us, what heart can well conceive, what tongue can utter? What amazement should it produce in us, to consider the brightest efflux of Divine Glory eclipsing and shrouding itself under so dark a cloud of mortal frailty; the Most High stooping into the quality of so mean a creature; the First-born and Heir-apparent of heaven descending from his throne of eternal majesty, and

Phil. ii. 7. voluntarily degrading himself into the *Form of a servant*, clad in rags, worn with labour and travel, exposed to contempt and disgrace; to reflect upon the great Creator and sovereign Lord of all the world, who reared the heavens, and founded the earth, who possesseth and upholdeth all things, needing himself a shelter, pinched with want, taking alms from his slaves, and paying tribute to his subjects; to contemplate the Son of God, willingly styling himself the Son of man, really subjecting himself to the duties, the necessities, the infirmities of human nature; suffering the

coarsest hardships, and extremest disasters thereof; all this upon freest choice, with full contentment, and perfect submission to so mean and so distasteful a condition!

We may observe with how admirable goodness he did vouchsafe to converse with a froward generation of men, to instruct a stupid and indocile sort of people, with all sorts of beneficence, to oblige an incredulous, insensible, and ingrateful crew; with how invincible a meekness and patience *He endured the contradiction of sinners*, the scorn-Heb. xii. 3. ful reproaches, the wrongful calumnies, the spiteful and cruel usages of the envious and malicious world; being to the highest extremity despised, hated, maligned, and abused by those whom he had most highly honoured, most affectionately loved, and conferred the greatest favours upon. We may with astonishment contemplate that strange contest between divine patience and human wickedness, striving which of them should excel; when we do peruse and weigh those enigmatical passages, God accused by man of blasphemy, the eternal Wisdom aspersed with folly, Truth itself impleaded of imposture, essential Love made guilty of mischief, and supreme Goodness styled a malefactor; infinite Power beat down, and trampled upon by impotent malice; the Judge of all the world, the Fountain of all authority and right, arraigned, condemned, and executed for injustice; *The desire of all nations* rejected by his Hag. ii. 7. own country and kindred; the Joy of paradise (whose lightsome countenance doth cheer heaven itself) almost overwhelmed with grief, uttering lamentable groans, tortured with grievous agonies;

the very heart of God bleeding, and the sole Author of life expiring.

We may further study Jesus, with a hearty compassion, and tears gushing from his inmost bowels, pitying not these his own sufferings, but the vengeance for them due and decreed unto his persecutors: we should mark him excusing their fault, and praying for their pardon; dying willingly for their good, when he died violently by their hand; passionately desiring their salvation, when they maliciously procured his destruction.

We should mind all the actions of the Son of God, our Saviour, with the most wise grounds, endearing circumstances, and precious fruits of them; his birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession; as containing instances of the greatest charity and humility possible shewed unto us, as arguments of the greatest love and gratitude due from us: mind them we should most seriously, so as to be heartily affected with them, so as to esteem worthily the transcendent honour done us by God assuming our nature, and exalting us to a conjunction with the divine nature; so as to be deeply sensible of our obligation to so immense a charity, that could do and suffer so much for us without any desert of ours, yea, notwithstanding our exceedingly bad deserts, our rebellions and enmities against him; so as to detest the heinousness of our sins, that needed so mighty an expiation, that caused so horrid a tragedy; so as not to neglect so great salvation so frankly offered, so dearly purchased for us; not to frustrate the designs of so unconceivable love and goodness, so as to obey readily so gracious a Master, to follow

carefully so admirable an example ; so as in imitation of him, and for his sake, to be meek and humble in heart and in deed, seeing he did so infinitely condescend and abase himself for us ; to be patient and submissive to his will, who stooped so low, and suffered so much for us ; so as to bear a general affection to mankind, grounded like his, not upon any particular interests, nor limited by any partial respects, but extended freely, in real desire and intention toward all ; liberally to impart the good things we possess, and patiently to brook the crosses we meet with, and heartily to forgive the offences done to us ; for that he freely did part with the greatest glories of eternity, with the highest dignities and the richest treasures of heaven, for our sake ; when we were *Enemies in our minds by wicked works, dead in trespasses and sins*, guilty of numberless grievous offences against him, by his blood redeeming us from wrath, reconciling us to the mercy and favour of God. Col. i. 21.
Eph. ii. 1.

3 We should also meditate upon the blessed Spirit of God, with equal goodness conspiring, and co-operating with all the purposes, to all the effects of grace, which conduce to our everlasting happiness ; more especially as the repairer of our decayed frames, the enlivener of our dead souls, the infuser of spiritual light into our dark minds, the kindler of spiritual warmth into our cold hearts ; the raiser of spiritual appetite to righteousness, and the relish of goodness in our stupid senses ; the imparter of spiritual strength and vigour to our feeble powers ; the author of all liberty, loosing us from captivity under the tyranny of Satan, from vassalage unto our own carnal lusts and passions ; from subjection

to a hard and imperious law, from bondage to the terrors of a guilty conscience: as him, that enableth us to perform the duties, and accomplish the conditions, required of us in order to our salvation, that qualifyeth us to be the sons of God by his effectual grace, and assureth us that we are so by his comfortable testimony; as our sure guide in the ways of truth and virtue; our faithful counsellor in all doubts and darknesses; our mighty support and succour in all needs, in all distresses; our ready guard against all assaults and temptations; our sweet comforter in all sadnesses and afflictions: who doth insinuate good thoughts, doth kindle holy desires, doth cherish pious resolutions, doth further honest endeavours in us: who only doth inflame our hearts with devotion toward God; doth encourage, doth enable us to approach unto him; doth prompt us with fit matter of request, and becometh advocate for the good success of our prayers.

We should mind him as the root of all good fruits growing in us, or sprouting from us; the producer of all good habits formed in us, the assister of all good works performed by us, the spring of all true content that we enjoy: to whom our embracing the faith, our continuing in hope, our working in charity, the purification of our hearts, the mortification of our lusts, the sanctification of our lives, the salvation of our souls are principally due, are most justly ascribed: as the author and preserver of so inestimable benefits unto us, let us mind him; and withal let us consider him as condescending to be a loving friend and constant guest to so mean and unworthy creatures; vouch-

safing to attend over us, to converse with us, to dwell in us, rendering our souls holy temples of his divinity, royal thrones of his majesty, bright orbs of his heavenly light, pleasant paradises of his blissful presence; our souls, which naturally are profane receptacles of wicked and impure affections, dark cells of false and fond imaginations, close prisons of black and sad thoughts: as graciously striving with us, striving to open and enter into our hearts barred against him by vain conceits and vicious inclinations: striving to reclaim us from the sins and errors, into which we are wont heedlessly or wilfully to precipitate ourselves; striving to make us, what in all duty and wisdom we should be, capable of divine favour, and fit for everlasting happiness: as enduring patiently manifold displeasures and disrespects from us, our rude oppositions against him, our frequent neglects of his kind admonitions, our many perverse humours, wanton freaks, wilful miscarriages, and unworthy dealings toward him.

We should thus mind the blessed Spirit of God, and be suitably affected toward him; so as to be duly sensible and thankful for those unexpressible gifts and blessings indulged to us by him; so as to render all love and reverence, all praise and glory, all obedience and service to him, especially so as to admit him cheerfully into our hearts; yea, invite him thither by our earnest prayers; to make fit preparations for his reception and entertainment, (by cleansing our hearts from all loathsome impurities,) to make him welcome, and treat him kindly, with all civil respect, with all humble observance; not grieving and vexing him by our distasteful

crossness and peevishness; not tempting him by our fond presumption, or base treachery; not extinguishing his heavenly light and holy fire by our foul lusts, our damp stupidities, our cold neglects, our neglects to foment and nourish them by the food of devout meditations and zealous desires: so let us mind him, as to admit gladly his gentle illapses, to delight in his most pleasant society, to hearken to his faithful suggestions, to comply with all his kindly motions, to behave ourselves modestly, consistently, and officiously toward him.

Thus should we employ our mind, all the faculties of our soul, our understanding, our will, our affections upon the blessed Trinity, the Supreme of all things above, the Founder of that celestial society, into which as Christians we are inserted; the Sovereign of that heavenly kingdom of which we are subjects; the Fountain of all the good and happiness we can hope for in that superior state. To the performance of which duty there be arguments and inducements innumerable; it is the most proper and connatural object of our mind, that for which it is fittest, and for which it was designed; the best intelligible, and infinitely most amiable of all things. It is the most worthy and noble object, the contemplation of which, and affection whereto, will most elevate, most enrich, most adorn, most enlarge the capacities, and most satisfy the appetites of our souls; it is the most sweet and pleasant object, wherein all light, all beauty, all perfection do shine; the sight and love of which do constitute Paradise, and beatify Heaven itself. It is the most useful and beneficial object of our

mind, which will best instruct us in what it concerneth us to know, will most incite us to those duties which we are obliged to perform, will be most efficacious to the begetting in us those dispositions, which are indispensably requisite for the attainment and for the enjoyment of that everlasting bliss; unto which that one blessed Unity and glorious Trinity in its infinite mercy bring us all: to whom be all glory, honour, and praise for ever. Amen.

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mind which will be left behind us in what is now
common as to know will most likely be to those
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